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# The Elementary English Review

SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT

VOL. XVIII

OCTOBER 1941

No. 6

Special Number  
CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK  
NOVEMBER 2-8

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The White Isle: Writing for Children . . . CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER  
Style in Children's Literature . . . . . JEAN GUTTERY  
Mr. Newbery Saves the Day: A One-Act Play  
for Choral Speakers . . . . . CLEAVES M. REECE  
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What Is a Good Children's Book? (Editorial)

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

J. L. CERTAIN, *Editor*  
Detroit, Michigan

\$2.50 a Year

Monthly from October through May Single Copies 40 Cents

# The Elementary English Review

Established, 1924, by C. C. Certain

J. L. Certain, *Editor*

VOL. XVIII

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of eight issues

Published  
1941  
January, February, March  
April, May, October  
November, December

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoa Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscription (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents.) Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

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From *There Was a Horse*, Folktales from Many Lands. Selected by  
Phyllis R. Fenner. Illustrated by Henry Pitz. Knopf.

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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## The White Isle: Writing for Children

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER\*

WHEN I AM asked about the technique of writing for children I feel puzzled and humble too. For I really know nothing about what might be called technique. I know only to write as clearly as I can, and to search deep in my mind for the character, the hopes and fears of long ago, so that I can bring these into expression. The unseen people I write about become more and more real until they seem to be the people around me.

I always care deeply for the subject of my writing, but it does not occur to me to select this because young people or children will like it.

Indeed it is difficult for me to trace where the "subject" comes from—that first intimation of a book which strikes across me from nowhere. As near as I can remember, the subject of *The White Isle*

came while reading a chapter on Roman marriage customs. I suddenly realized how full of dread would be these solemn rites to the young Roman bride. Especially if, as was quite possible, she was only thirteen years old and had never seen her husband-to-be.

At once this seemed a story and went spinning. Lavinia was there and her kind mother, her austere father, Marcus her brother, and the dreadful young man, her betrothed. Then because my mind was upon England and its heartbreaking tragedy I thought of an exile to Britain; an exile for all of the family leaving the timid bride in Rome to face her Roman husband and her husband's

family all alone. But in my story the marriage failed at the last moment leaving the young girl free to go to Britain

\* Author. For a list of Mrs. Snedecker's books, see the Bibliography, page 231.



From *The White Isle*, by  
Caroline Dale Snedecker.  
Courtesy of Doubleday, Doran.

with her parents. From here onward the plot became a journey. It may be interesting to hear how I took this journey.

I went first to a travel bureau. "I expect to travel up the West Coast of Italy and northward through France," I told them. "But not in any way that will benefit you. For I shall pay no fares. It will only be imagination. Will you give me your travel material and guides?"

This was during one of the early but terrifying phases of the war.

"I am sorry, Madame," said the agent, "but we can give no more travel literature to anyone. Where this came from no more will come. We must keep what we have."

This was certainly discouraging. But again, and this time very timidly, I asked at a travel bureau in New York.

"Give you our travel literature?" said the agent. "But of course we will, whatever you want. Your mode of travel is the very best and we are delighted to help you."

He began to pass beautifully illustrated booklets across the counter.

"Take this and this, and yes, you will want this one too. I'm writing a book myself about my native Alsace."

As I myself have an Alsatian grandfather we were at once friends. He gave my sister and me as much as we could carry.

"And be sure to stop at Monaco on your way down the hall. They will give you beautiful books."

Indeed my sister and I could scarcely carry away all that was given us.

I hurried home and at once fell to work, absorbing both pictures and text and even the prices of tickets. I did not realize how intensely I was journeying until at one juncture I decided that my book was not a book. I must abandon it.

I had the funniest feeling, especially after I had gone to bed, that I had been *sent home*. My horizon had suddenly narrowed. No more for me were those lofty mountain peaks, the steep dramatic shore and the Mediterranean blue. They were gone.

Then after some questioning and trouble I went to work again. At once the breadth and color came back—the beautiful *Corniche d'Or* was restored to me, the far sweeping *Via Aurelia*, the incomparable *Cote d'Azur*.

And now as I went up the West Coast of Italy, I stripped each town of all but its Roman aspect. Each one became a *Little Rome* with its Forum, its defensive wall, and its inevitable arena outside the wall in the meadows. Sterile and monotonous they seemed to me and I realized keenly how much the Medieval Ages had enriched these cities in beauty and meaning. I came to the Maritime Alps. Then as I passed out of Italy into Southern France or Gaul I was delighted to find myself in the midst of Greek civilization. Here, as is always true in Greek surroundings, new characters came to life, a kind Greek host and Neraea his daughter to be a sweetheart for my Roman Marcus.

I had here the aid of some guide books which a friend had brought from Provence. I was astonished that almost the entire text and pictures were devoted to Greek and Roman remains.

And so I travelled up the Rhone, across northern Gaul, across the Channel to Britain. Here I found the highest interest of all. For here I myself had been over the actual ground. Here travelling from place to place in Devon and Cornwall, I had come upon the most delectable little Celtic saints. Here were their hermit-cells, their tiniest of churches, their charming stories. They gave me a com-

# Style In Children's Literature

JEAN GUTTERY\*

New York City

If an author has the ability to make vivid the colors of an August sunset against the distant blue outline of mountain tops, or the wild sound of a winter storm on a lonely, forgotten beach, he is an artist with words, whether he is writing for children or adults. If, through his sensitivity to the sound and meaning of words, he is able to transfer to his reader a picture, an emotion, or an idea, he is writing with what we call "style," no matter whether his reader is young or mature. Anyone, then, who can appreciate the beauty and design in Pater's prose ought to be able to appreciate the rhythm and wording in the best of children's literature—from Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* to Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*. In contemporary juvenile literature, children and adults alike should respond to the memorable phrasing of Elizabeth Goudge's *Smoky House*, Hilda van Stockum's *Kersti*, Elizabeth Orton Jones' *Maminka's Children*, and of many other modern stories written particularly for the child.

There are certain characteristics, however, which are not by any means found only in children's literature, but which seem to be particularly important in style designed for children. Many authors, for instance, adapt their style to the young reader by using a very informal and intimate approach. The author puts himself on the level of the child and speaks to him on personal, friendly terms as if they had shared secrets many times before. There is nothing sentimental about this style; it is just an occasional twist of a phrase that seems to establish

understanding between the author and the reader. A conversational tone or an unexpected use of the second person can make the young reader at home with the author and give him the feeling that he and the author know just a bit more about the world than anyone else. It is this approach which Elizabeth Goudge uses so effectively when she breaks into the narrative of *Smoky House* every so often with such an observation as, "For children, of course, are much more sensible than grown-ups and dogs more sensible than children." E. Nesbit in *Wet Magic* uses the same tone: "I don't believe they'll let you take it at all," said Bernard—and if you know anything of grown-ups you will know that Bernard proved to be quite right." A. A. Milne and Kenneth Grahame are particularly skillful with this approach.

A child's imagination is extremely visual, having little patience with abstractness or vagueness. When a child listens to a story, he wants to be able to fix in his mind in orderly and concrete fashion every detail of the setting and the action. A child's mind is like the mind of a stage director, seeing every play vividly but insisting on knowing exactly where every piece of stage setting is located and what type of property is used. So authors who write for children use a style rich in minute details and set their stories carefully in a well-planned background. When Margery Bianco introduces the hurdy-gurdy man to town in her book, *The Hurdy-Gurdy Man*, she tells about the weather, the season of year, and describes what all the town-people are doing at the time. It is a vivid

\* Member of the Research Service Division, Silver Burdett Company.

picture that Elizabeth Goudge paints of the village Faraway in *Smoky House*. Before meeting any of the main characters of the story, the reader knows that the people of Faraway are gay and kind, that they live in cottages "built of white-washed stone and thatched with golden straw," that they keep gardens filled with bushes of scarlet fuchsia and purple veronica, and that the "moors closed in this lovely land on three sides, and on the fourth side was the sea." In telling a child a story verbally, a story-teller knows that if he describes a meadow filled with flowers, the child will demand to know what *kind* of flowers. In writing for children, then, an author anticipates such questions. When Elizabeth Orton Jones describes the little boy in *Maminka's Children* as running out the door with a bucket in his hand, it is not just a bucket that she gives the boy but a "red-striped" bucket, and immediately the entire scene becomes visual. The color of a bucket in this case satisfies a child's curiosity about details just as in Emma Brock's *The Greedy Goat* the fact that the goat eats not just an unspecified amount of garden flowers but eats "all the purple asters and *four* of the sunflowers" appeals to a child's love of exactness. Although it is also incidental to the plot of Clare Newberry's *Babette*, it is important to the child reader to have an itemized list of all the Christmas presents Charity receives, and so the reader learns that besides Babette, the cat, Charity receives a doll, red mittens, a pink tea set, hankies, and the like.

A style rich in detail is usually rich in color. Although a colorful style is the goal of many an author writing for any age level, it is particularly important for children who are especially sensitive to the color element. Color is used generously and artistically in contemporary literature for children. Notice how colorful

and attractive Elizabeth Orton Jones makes a bowl of chicken food appear in *Maminka's Children*:

She filled a bowl with chicken food, and slipped a long red apple peeling, a lovely blue prune, a bright green pepper, a light green cabbage leaf, a purple beet, and some white, white rice into her pocket.

When Emma Brock describes *Little Fat Gretchen* running into a barnyard, she fills her path with color. "She ran into the sunlight that shone across the striped green and yellow fields and into the barnyard."

Notice how carefully words are chosen and how artistically color is used in the following quotations:

Winter's feather-duster had swept the last remnants of gold off the earth—*Kersti*, Hilda van Stockum.

A white duck was waddling in the willow pool in the pale morning light—*Little Fat Gretchen*, Emma Brock.

He wore a mulberry-colored coat and exquisite lace ruffles terribly torn, and the powder flew in a silver cloud from his bright red hair—*Smoky House*, Elizabeth Goudge.

The color red seems to play an interesting and picturesque part in stories for children. When Snipp, Snapp, and Snurr, in Maj Lindman's book, *Snipp, Snapp, Snurr and the Red Shoes* want to buy their mother a present, they want not only slippers but they must be red slippers. When Dorothy Kunhardt tells a story of an old man who likes junket in the book *Junket is Nice*, the old man has a red beard, wears red slippers, and eats out of a red bowl. In Elizabeth Goudge's *Smoky House* the highwayman and adventurer is remembered as "The-Man-with-the-Red-Handkerchief."

Use of well-chosen figures of speech adds to the interest of any style, and it is interesting to note how authors adapt figures of speech to the experience of children. Style is enriched by the use of

similes, but the similes are always more colorful in children's books when they spring naturally from the life of children and from those specific experiences with which they are most familiar. When Hilda van Stockum wants to impress the idea of "youngness" on her reader in *Kersti*, she draws upon all the illustrations of "newness" and "youngness" closest to the life of a child. She says in describing a new-born baby, "He is younger than a new moon, younger than the buds on the trees, younger than the eggs we found in the nest this morning, younger even than the hole in your stocking." Peggy Bacon appeals to the imagination of children in her description of a kitten in *Mercy and the Mouse*, "She was soft like the dust under the bed, with eyes like huckleberries and whiskers like a thistle." Elizabeth Goudge uses the simile with unusual effectiveness as is apparent in the following quotations from *Smoky House*:

The golden thatch on the roof was so thick that they were as warm under it as a teapot is when you put a tea-cosy on top. Dancing with him was like dancing with a whirlwind on its afternoon out. Making a noise like a cork-coming-out-of-a-bottle, which was her favorite after the cats-on-the-roof-noise.

Just as an author adapts a figure of speech to the experience of a child, so he must adapt his expressions of time, size, and distance to a child's experience and his desire for concrete imagery. Style itself becomes more vivid when abstract measurements are replaced with more realistic measurements which a child can visualize. Lucy Embury in *The Listening Man* does not describe age in abstract terms of the number of years, but she says, "Already for more than a lifetime of eight elephants it has endured." W. H. Hudson creates a picture of early morning in *Tales of the Pampas* when in-

stead of naming the hour of day, he says, "The stars were still shining when we set out on our journey." Again a realistic description of the time of day is found in Elizabeth Orton Jones' *Maminka's Children* when Aunt Patsy is said to arrive "just at Old Cow's milking time." The reader of Doris Gates' *Blue Willow* discovers that the little girl, Janey, is very short when Janey looks down at her shadow which was "a very short shadow even for a ten-year-old." Another little girl, Sally, in Cornelia Meigs' *Mother Makes Christmas* is described as being big enough now to see herself in the mirror when she sits at table. W. H. Hudson in *Tales of the Pampas* makes a tree trunk seem very large, indeed, by saying that "five men with their arms stretched to their utmost could hardly encircle it."

Good literary style is distinguished not only by its color, choice of words, and visual appeal, but also by its ability to please the ear, its rhythm, balance, its sentence and story pattern. Writers of children's literature show a definite consciousness of rhythm and an appreciation of children's sensitivity to it. Particularly noticeable is the fact that they capitalize on children's love of repetition. Just as young children will repeat a sentence or a phrase over and over in a sing-song way fascinated by the sound of the words, so authors writing for children will establish a definite sentence pattern by repeating action with only a slight variation in wording. Partly for the sake of simplicity, partly for the sake of rhythm, partly for the sake of building to a climax, an author will repeat as Marjorie Flack does in *Angus and the Cat*—

"Angus came closer"—and the cat sat up.  
"Angus came closer"—up jumped the cat.  
"Angus came closer"—that little cat boxed  
his ears.

Miss Flack uses this same technique again very effectively in *Wait for William*

when Charles and Nancy must both repeat everything that is said to William.

Charles said, "Hurry up, William, put away your scooter and we will take you down Maine Street to see the Circus Parade."

Nancy said, "Hurry up, William, put away your scooter and we will take you down Maine Street to see the Circus Parade."

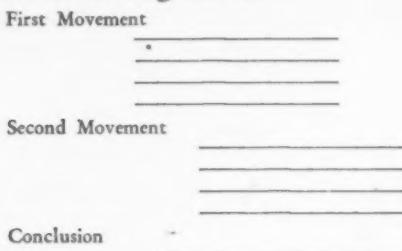
Repetition in sentence structure is carried through an entire story in "The Poppy Story," one of the *Arabella and Araminta Stories* by Gertrude Smith. Here everything that Arabella does must be repeated because her twin, Araminta, does it too. "Arabella lived in a white house on a green hill, and Araminta lived in a white house on a green hill."

Repetition not only of sentences but of individual words is used effectively. When Alice Dalgliesh writes a story about *The Little Wooden Farmer*, the reader expects the story to center about a lot of wooden things. It starts off with a nice rhythm of repetition: "There was a little wooden farmer who lived with his little wooden wife in a neat wooden farmhouse." In Marjorie Flack's *Angus Lost* the repetition of the word *same* gives not only rhythm but strengthens the mood of boredom for Angus who is sick of the *same* yard, the *same* house, the *same* cat, and the *same* things. Repetition in *Wait for William* also is used as a special method of emphasis. It achieves an emotional response when it is used in connection with William standing alone. If William were merely standing "alone," it would elicit little reaction, but he is a very pathetic figure when he is "standing alone, all alone." Notice how well great space is expressed by simple repetition when Miss Flack says, "William looked down, way down. Their friends looked up, way up."

The use of repetition achieves other purposes as well in children's literature. It contributes to story pattern in addition

to sentence pattern and it helps the reader to anticipate what is coming in the story. Children enjoy guessing what is going to happen next and discovering that their guesses were correct. An author who uses the device of repetition subtly enough and simply enough can very successfully foreshadow the next step in the story for his young reader. One reason why *Little Black Sambo* has always proved so popular is probably that it is designed on just this pattern. After Little Black Sambo has once forfeited an article of his clothing to a tiger, it is easy to foresee that as the story progresses he will gradually give up one piece of clothing after another. More recently in Peggy Bacon's *The Lion-Hearted Kitten*, once the kitten evolves her strategy to outwit the wolf, the reader knows that she will use this same strategy on the tiger and the snake. In Margery Bianco's *The Hurdy-Gurdy Man*, the hurdy-gurdy man meets with the same experience of being turned away from all the neat looking stores. This is repeated so often that when the hurdy-gurdy man finds a tumble-down shack among all the neat shops, even the youngest reader is instinctively sure that here he will be welcomed. In Grace Paull's *Peanut Butter's Slide* the design is established at the beginning of the story for Peanut Butter, the goat, to do everything the boys do, and this is followed throughout. Sometimes in these stories a refrain is built up by having one character at regular intervals repeat the same idea. A child reading Lois Lenski's *The Easter Rabbit's Parade* learns to look for the growling remarks of Old Graybeard the Goat as time after time he may always be counted on to look on the dark side of any suggestion. After the first few times, one also expects Marjorie Flack's sheep in *Up in the Air* to repeat his reminder that they must all be "brave together."

It is interesting to note that many of these stories building on repetition use almost the same design. The initial action takes place in three or four moves varying only slightly. The main character reaches an impasse here or introduces a new action which takes up three or four similar moves. Finally, of course, there is the concluding move of a problem solved and a happy ending. The movement translated into diagram form looks something like this:



Notice how this is followed in Dorothy Kunhardt's *Junket is Nice* and how easy it is to anticipate the next move. Each movement builds to its own climax.

*First Movement*

First come all the fastest runners to see the old man.  
Then come all the moderate runners.  
Then come all the walkers.  
Then comes the little boy.

*Second Movement*

Some people make a wrong guess as to the man's thoughts.  
Others make a wrong guess.  
Still another wrong guess is made.  
But the little boy guesses right.

*Conclusion*

Junket is nice!

This same pattern is used in *Peanut Butter's Slide* when first the story follows the various things the boys and Peanut Butter do together. The next move starts in saying that best of all, they like to slide but are never able to find a place quite satisfactory. The various sliding places are listed with the climax that they find the right place on the back of Father's new car. Father, himself, brings the story to a happy conclusion by buying them a slide. This story design with minor variations may be seen in *The Hurdy-Gurdy*

*Man* by Margery Bianco, *Angus Lost* by Margery Flack, *Snipp, Snapp, And Snurr and the Red Shoes*, by Maj Lindman, *The Lion-Hearted Kitten* by Peggy Bacon, and many others.

Style, then, in children's literature requires all the skill, planning, artistry that are used in writing for any age. Simplicity, color, rhythm are as important, if not more important, in children's literature as in literature for adults. The most interesting observations in studying style in children's literature come in noting how these same qualities of style are adapted to children's taste and experience, making the reading matter not only more colorful, musical, and interesting but making it more colorful, musical, and interesting for children.

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# Mr. Newbery Saves the Day

## A One-Act Play for Choral Speakers

CLEAVES M. REECE

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** All the children in the sixth grade took part in making the play; therefore, each child was able to enter into the chorus work with ease. We made a point of clear enunciation, and different children took the responsibility of bringing in the chorus at certain times. If this arrangement is not found workable, a trained chorus may be grouped on the front seats of the auditorium.

Interesting reference material which could be used effectively as a prelude to the play will be found in the story, "Goody Two Shoes," in *Tales and Travel* by Julia Letheld Hahn, published by Houghton Mifflin.

### CHARACTERS

**MANAGER:** A boy with a sense of humor and rhythm; wearing his father's vest and a skull cap.

**CLERK:** A chic little girl with a white apron and cap; a dustcloth in her hand.

**SECRETARY:** A nonchalant fellow with a large paper pad and many pencils in his pockets.

**CHORUS:** Any or all of the children in the audience.

**BOOK CHARACTERS:** Any characters from the Newbery prize books.

Each child who represents a book character will make his own selection and write his own lines.

### SCENE

The interior of a small book shop. A folding screen on which the children have pinned bright colored papers cut and printed with favorite book titles and placed to represent books in rows, will make an excellent back drop. Gay book jackets will add to the interest. Three movable desks and chairs placed in a row. Two telephones, one on the manager's desk and another representing an extension placed on the secretary's desk. A child's cash register is on the clerk's desk.

The three main characters enter and are seated. Manager takes the center chair and desk.

**MANAGER:** (*Singing, chin in hand, a look of deep concern on his face.*)

Dear, dear, what can the matter be?

Dear, dear, what can the matter be?

Dear, dear, what *can* the matter be?

Not a book sold today!

**CLERK:** Not a book sold today!

**SEC'Y:** No, not a book sold today!

**MANAGER:** (*Indicates the bright books on shelves.*)

You'd think that with colors as gay as the autumn,

Here's blue, green, and purple; the shelves simply flaunt them,

That none could resist, they'd all have to want them,

But not a book sold today.

**CHORUS:** Not a book sold today?

**MANAGER:** Right, not a book sold today.

(*Chorus comes in with selection of nursery rhymes. "Baa, Baa Black Sheep," and "Tom Tinker" were given in unison. The manager listens.*)

**MANAGER:** We know Tom Tinker and we all know the Dame,  
But we can't sell their books, regardless of their fame.

**CHORUS:** Well Here's  
"Poor Old Robinson Crusoe. Poor Old Robinson Crusoe!  
They made him a coat of an old Nanny-goat,  
We wonder how they could do so?"

**CLERK:** (*Turns to the books on the shelves pretending to take one down. Has book in desk which she opens and shows to manager.*)

And here's

"Poor old Johnathan Bing  
Who went in his carriage to visit the king  
But when he arrived  
A soldier said 'Hi'  
You can't see the king  
You've forgotten your tie."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *Now We Are Six*, by A. A. Milne. Published and copyrighted by E. P. Dutton and Company. Used by special permission.

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

**CHORUS, CLERK, SEC'Y:** Poor Old Johnathan  
Bing!

**MANAGER:** I'll admit they're pathetic, with  
much to commend them  
It's often I wrap them, it's often I send  
them.

They are returned with this comment  
It surely condemns them  
"Who cares for old foggies like these!"

**ALL:** Who cares for old foggies like these!

**SOLO BY MEMBER OF CHORUS:** Here's a  
young fellow psychologists say  
Passes his tests with a straight rating "A"  
Knows all the answers  
They call him a find,  
As smart as a tack  
I. Q. 159.

**MANAGER:** (*Nodding his head and looking  
very wise.*)  
Yes, "James, James Morrison Morrison  
Weatherby George Dupree  
Who took great care of his mother  
When he was only three.  
James James Morrison Morrison  
Said to his mother, said he,  
You must never go down to the end of  
town

Unless you go down with me."<sup>2</sup>

**SEC'Y:** He must have driven his mother wild.  
**CLERK:** I thought him a most precocious child.

**MANAGER:** He must have driven his mother  
wild.

**CHORUS:** We've nothing more then to sug-  
gest, unless it's Newbery.

**MANAGER:** Newbery, who is he? Where does  
he live?

**CHORUS:** At Fourth and McKee.

**MANAGER:** His telephone number?

**CHORUS:** Four fifty-three.

**MANAGER:** (*Rises and takes the telephone re-  
ceiver. Sec'y removes his receiver to listen  
in. The little clerk moves over close to the  
manager to hear what is said.*)

**MANAGER:** Hello, Central,

Give me Newbery.  
Where does he live?  
At Fourth and McKee.  
Oh, his telephone number,  
Four fifty-three.

(*Pause. Everything is very quiet and all  
are listening expectantly.*)

**MANAGER:** Hello, hello! Is this Newbery?  
Newbery, at Fourth and McKee,  
Telephone number, four fifty-three.

(*Pause*)

<sup>2</sup> From *Now We Are Six*.

Not Newbery? Just his secretary!

**CLERK:** Ask his secretary!

**SEC'Y:** Good as Newbery.

**MANAGER:** The Book Shop Calling. (*Pause.*)

Oh, we've stories of dogs and we've stories  
of cats,

We've stories of babies in their cradles.  
And rats that ate cheese out of the vats  
And licked the soup from the cook's own  
ladles.

**CLERK:** (*Leans over and speaks directly into  
the mouthpiece.*)

"Tore open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats!"

**SEC'Y:** (*Over the extension line.*)  
"And even spoiled the women's chats  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats."

**MANAGER:** And that's that.

And now it haps  
That the till won't tap.

**CLERK:** (*Reaching over and trying to open  
the cash register.*)

What! the till won't tap?

**SEC'Y:** (*Half rising from his seat.*)  
The till won't tap!

**MANAGER:** (*Over phone which he has held  
during all the speaking.*)

Who wants a sadder tale than that!

**CLERK AND SEC'Y:** Yes, who wants a sadder  
tale than that. (*Pause.*)

**MANAGER:** What's that you say?

You've books of all sizes  
You've books that win prizes?  
Whole purses of gold,  
Too good to be told.  
You'll send them right over?  
We'll soon be in clover.  
Well, what do you think of that?  
(*Hangs up the receiver.*)

**CLERK AND SEC'Y:** Well, what do you think  
of that?

**MANAGER:** (*Walks back and forth rubbing  
his hands together. The Secretary writes  
furiously on his pad. The Clerk dusts the  
books and tables.*)

Calm yourselves  
Don't be in a flurry  
If this is the truth  
We've never a worry.

(*Lucinda enters on roller skates, carrying  
her book under her arm. The Clerk and  
Secretary hasten to steady her. She makes  
a bow to the Manager.*)

LUCINDA: Please let me introduce myself.  
I'm an orphan.

MANAGER: An orphan?

CLERK AND SEC'Y: (*In sympathetic voices.*)  
An orphan?

LUCINDA: But not permanent—just temporary.

SEC'Y: Not permanent?

CLERK: Just temporary?

MANAGER: (*Scratches his head.*)  
How extraordinary! How extraordinary!

LUCINDA: You see my name's Lucinda.  
New York City is my home.  
My father's an importer  
And spends his time in Rome.  
Being an orphan is fun  
If I can escape Aunt Hannie,  
But she'll get me yet  
As the goblins got Orphan Annie.  
(Hands the Manager her book—waves good-by and skates out. Manager, Clerk and Secretary stand looking after her. They then examine the book turning the pages slowly.)

MANAGER: An orphan.

CLERK: But not permanent.

SEC'Y: Just temporary.

MANAGER: How extraordinary! How extraordinary!

CLINT: (*Enters carrying Smoky by Will James.*)

MANAGER: Who is this rider of the prairie?  
Has he happened in by chance?

CLINT: Who me? I'm the bronc buster of Rockin' R Ranch  
And it's long hard days I've spent  
On sleek black ponies.  
Teeth has took a few shirts off my back  
And hoofs has took hunks out o' these bat-winged chaps.  
I'm loose like an old clock.  
Some day, some way  
Some buckin' hunk o' horse flesh  
Is goin' to take the tick out of o' me  
And scatter me over the western prairies.  
Who'll miss me? Who'll miss me?  
My good horse Smoky—yes, Smoky.  
(Hands the book to the Manager and saunters out.)

(Supplement with as many other characters from Newbery Prize books as time permits. After all the book characters have come and gone and their books are on the Manager's desk, he goes to the phone.)

MANAGER: Hello Central  
Give me Newbery.  
Yes, Newbery, at Fourth and McKee.  
Yes, Newbery at four fifty-three. (*Pause.*)  
Hello, hello! Is this Newbery?  
Well, Mr. Newbery it's plain to see  
Your books are the tops, Mr. Newbery.

CLERK: (*Speaking into the receiver.*)  
Your books are the tops Mr. Newbery.  
SEC'Y: (*Picks up the extension phone.*)  
Your books are the tops Mr. Newbery.  
(Manager replaces receiver.)

MANAGER: (*Admiring the books left on his table turns to Clerk and Secretary*)  
Dust off the counter, please  
And hang out a sign,  
The Newbery Prize Books  
At one fifty-nine.  
Get out the order blanks  
The pencils and the gum  
And ring up the change please  
For the customers will come.  
The customers will come.  
(He is very busy looking at the new books. The Secretary prints a sign and the Clerk is busy dusting and arranging books. Secretary starting out with his sign stops short and Manager and Clerk join him. All stand as looking out into street.)

MANAGER: The customers have come.

CLERK: Yes, the customers have come.

SEC'Y: The customers have come.  
(Children from the chorus come into the shop and there is a busy time as they select books and carry them away. No lines but done in pantomime. After all the books are sold, the Manager, Clerk and Secretary are seated again as at the beginning of the play.)

MANAGER: Oh dear.  
What can the matter be?

CLERK: Dear, dear, what can the matter be?

SEC'Y: Yes, yes, what can the matter be?

MANAGER: Not a book left to sell.

CLERK AND SEC'Y: Not a book left to sell.

MANAGER: (*Takes down the receiver.*)  
What's that number?

CLERK: Four five three.

MANAGER: Hello, Hello  
Mr. Newbery?  
Not Newbery  
Just his secretary.

CLERK: Tell his secretary.

SEC'Y: Good as Newbery.

# America In Story

## A Regional Bibliography

PEARL W. LYONS

*Clark School, Flint, Michigan*

THE FOLLOWING excerpt is a typical example of the literature believed appropriate for children back in the Pilgrims' days. This is taken from the old *New England Primer*.

I in the burying place may see  
Graves shorter there than I;  
From Death's arrest no age is free,  
Young children too may die.  
My God, may such an awful sight  
Awakening be to me.  
Oh! that by early grace I might  
For Death prepared be.

Some must still believe the same, for in reading a book copyrighted in 1939 I found the author advised that all ten-year-olds read nothing but books that had stood the purge, books written fifty to one hundred years ago, such as *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Robin Hood*, *King Arthur* and *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*. I wonder whether the fact that mother and grandfather read the story when they were children is any reason to believe that it is a better book than one just off the press. Grandfather rode in carriages and cutters and ox-carts, but we are not riding in them now.

Advising ancestors, lack of experience with growing children, enforced reading in the courses of study at school, are perhaps to blame for this viewpoint. In some literature classes, it seems that anything written later than 1900 is not considered suitable inspirational material for students and teachers to dwell upon. Some grade schools have broadened their viewpoints, I know, for I have helped rewrite my city's course of study for literature. In it we do not have a single

"must." We suggest, give a preferred list, but leave many gaps to be filled in as demands arise, interests change, and new books are written which fit the occasion better.

Books extend a child's vision and understanding immeasurably beyond anything he can acquire outside real experience and travel. If we are to guide his reading habits, especially his leisure time reading, must we not offer him stories within his span of interest and ambitions, rather than what Greek gods and soldiers were doing two thousand years ago? Would it not be far better for him to know what the pioneers and scouts and inventors were doing in his own land, how boys of his age are and were living in his own huge country?

Many children have not traveled out of their own country and have had few experiences outside of home and school and the movies. In geography class they travel vicariously from state to state and country to country, but how much better the facts stick and how much better acquainted with those places they feel, if they read of personal, everyday lives of people in stories! In *Along The Erie Towpath* by Enid La Monte Meadowcroft the children follow young David along the canal and learn how boys lived in New York in the early years of the last century. In *Young Mac Of Fort Vancouver* by Mary Jane Carr, they travel down the Columbia river with the voyageurs and Young Mac, and learn the heart-ache of leaving the pleasant, free life of the Indian village for the strenuous, stern life of the English fort.

Besides learning the geographical facts through stories, children also gain appreciation of character. In *On To Oregon*, John Sager has to be punished for laziness and disobedience, but his hero, Kit Carson, makes him see how just is his punishment. *Toby Tyler* becomes dissatisfied at home because he has to work too hard and "doesn't ever get filled up." He runs away with the circus only to be worked harder, and to be whipped to a mean man's fancy.

What happens to a hero or heroine with whom a child identifies himself, happens to the child himself. What is said in commendation or encouragement of this hero's qualities, acts as an encouragement to the reader or listener. The experiences the hero goes through show him how somebody fitted himself into a group, made friends, and grew up.

A leading critic of children's books and a writer herself, tells that the judging committee of the New York *Herald Tribune's* Spring Book Festival awards asked the opinions of many classes of children, asked them to help judge the stories for interest and appeal, so that the final decision could be as nearly as possible the direct award of children themselves. This committee felt that it was a good thing to let the children teach us occasionally.

A like procedure has been used in compiling the following list of very short reviews. The boys and girls in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade literature classes and I have enjoyed many of these stories together. The children have saved their pennies and brought them to school that we might own many of them. They have selected them as friends that they wished to have near them. What better recommendation can we ask?

#### ALABAMA

**Little Cumsee in Dixie.** Helen Alison Kyser. Longmans.

Cumsee's most exciting adventure is getting caught in an old house in a bad storm, and making a discovery that clears Mars Tom of many troubles. 6 to 14.

**Zeke.** Mary White Ovington. Harcourt, Brace. Zeke, a little negro boy, is very brave and so very successful in his many childhood adventures. His big brother pays his way through Tuskegee Institute. 6 to 12.

**Frawg.** Annie Vaughn Weaver. Stokes.

Frawg lives on an Alabama plantation with Buckeye, his dog, and Iwilla and Eveleena, his little sisters. In the middle of a watermelon patch, bordered by tall sunflowers, stands their cabin. 4 to 10.

**Boochy's Wings.** Annie Vaughn Weaver. Stokes.

Boochy's family live on their own little cotton farm. Boochy so wants to fly like the birds that he does every possible thing toward this achievement, from fixing himself a pair of turkey wings to be tried from the pig sty roof, to getting religion at camp meeting. 6 to 12.

#### ARIZONA

**Tangled Waters.** Florence Crannell Means. Houghton Mifflin.

The Navajo reservation in Arizona is the setting for this story of Altolie, a Navajo girl of fifteen, her kind mother, gambling step-father, and the fierce old step-grandmother. 12 to 16.

**Waterless Mountain.** Laura Adams Armer. Longmans.

The deserts, mountains, and canyons of the Navajos in northern Arizona, the trees, animals, and ancient cliff-dwellings, the legends, habits and traditions of these people are shown to us through the Indian boy hero.

**Dark Circle of Branches.** Laura Adams Armer. Longmans.

Na Nai learns from the Medicine Man, Kit Carson, and his two little Mexican playmates. 10 to 14.

**Kwahu, the Hopi Indian Boy.** George Newell Moran. American Book.

The old Pueblo civilization is shown to us through the brave son of a Hopi Indian chief, living just before the coming of the white man. The ideals, habits, and skills of these peace-loving dwellers of the terraced houses on a rocky table land of the Arizona desert are told through his experiences.

**Glen Hazard Cowboys.** Maristan Chapman. Appleton-Century.

These boys show us life as it is lived on the open range of an Arizona ranch.

### ARKANSAS

**Lost Corner.** Charlie May Simon. Dutton.

In Lost Corner where the Jackson family live, the measles come along, so Jeb and Melissa move out. On their way to their aunt's house they lose their way, and end up at old Mr. Bogg's cabin, which is filled with his animal friends. Just as they all get settled, his two grandchildren come from the city, and then the fun begins. 8 to 14.

**Teeny Gay.** Charlie May Simon. Dutton.

Teeny Gay lives on the White River in a houseboat tied to a willow tree. But a great flood sweeps it down the torrent.

**Robin on the Mountain.** Charlie May Simon. Dutton.

Robin lives in the Ozarks when his family is not moving from place to place with his father, a share cropper. Robin wishes he could have a permanent home, and when they move to Possum Kingdom, he decides that this is the place and stakes a claim.

### CALIFORNIA

**Children of the Lighthouse.** Nora Archibald Smith. Houghton Mifflin.

In the lighthouse on one of the Farallon Islands, off San Francisco Bay, live the lighthouse keeper and his little son and daughter. Disappointment and heartbreak come when they are ordered to leave. 8 to 14.

**On the Golden Trail.** Hildegard Hawthorne. Longmans.

Seth Hosmer travels from his uncle's farm in Massachusetts to California in search of his father who has been gone six years seeking his fortune during the gold rush days. He works his way along the Erie Canal, the Mississippi, the long overland trail from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sutter's Creek and Carson's Hills. 10 to 14.

**Rolling Wheels.** Katherine Grey. Little, Brown.

The Lambert family travel by prairie schooner from Indiana to California in 1845 in search of gold.

**Hills of Gold.** Katherine Grey. Little, Brown.

A continuation of the foregoing. Jerd and Betsy, more grown up now, have great adventures in the excitement of the gold rush, but

reach the conclusion that they'd rather be farmers. 12 to 16.

**The Hidden Valley.** Laura Benet. Dodd, Mead.

In the Yosemite Valley in the 1840's, two boys, one Indian and one white, become fast friends while adventuring, exploring, and foraging. 11 to 14.

**California Fairy Tales.** Monica Shannon. Doubleday, Doran.

An impish sense of humor pervades these tales of the "good folks" of the dense forests of the high Sierras and the desert.

**Billy Butter.** Bertha and Elmer Hader. Macmillan.

On the steep slopes of Telegraph Hill in San Francisco gambols Billy, the little goat that Michael Giovanni bought at the market, thus saving him from being turned into an Easter dinner. He goes to school, to church, and even to Chinatown. 6 to 12.

**Long Wharf.** Howard Pease. Dodd, Mead.

Young Danny is deserted by his shipmates and has to fight for existence on San Francisco's water front in the gold rush days, while his friends go to Sutter's Fort. 12 to 16.

**Ho For California!** Enid Johnson and Anna Merriman Peck. Harper.

This is the story of the thrills and adventures of the gold rush days of old California. Two boys start from Nantucket and travel across the isthmus of Panama.

**Keturah Came 'Round The Horn.** Ada Claire Darby. Stokes.

In this story of old California, a New England girl of fifteen sails with her father, who is the captain of the boat, to California in 1846, and braves the dangers of winning that territory for the Union. 12 to 15.

### COLORADO

**Conquerors Of The River.** Richard Aldrich Summers. Oxford.

This story is of the terrors and adventures on the first conquest of the Colorado river.

**Stagecoach Trail.** Ralph E. Johnson. Crowell.

From a wooden platform, built in the crotch of a huge cottonwood, Dan Curtis watched for the stagecoach, covered wagons, trappers and hunters traveling the western trails. From here he discovered Yellow Wolf, the bad Cheyenne Indian, and Piah, the captive Ute Indian boy with the stolen coach horses.

**Nelly's Silver Mine.** Helen Hunt Jackson.

Little, Brown.

This story carries from a Christmas day in a New England parsonage with Nelly, her twin brother and parents, to far away Colorado. The father must go for his health's sake, but Nelly hopes to find and claim a silver mine for the family pocketbook's sake.

**Penny For Luck.** Florence Crannell Means.

Houghton.

Penny runs away from an orphanage to a settlement which is now one of the ghost towns of Colorado.

**The Comeback.** Joe Mills. Dodd, Mead.

A brave collie proves her loyalty to her master by coming back at a time of need to save his life.

**CONNECTICUT****Phebe Fairchild.** Lois Lenski. Stokes.

This is a true story of Phebe Fairchild in the 1830's.

**Bound Girl Of Cobble Hill.** Lois Lenski. Stokes.

Mindwell Gibbs finds it hard to live up to her name after she is sent to live with a mean uncle who is a tavern keeper. The story takes place in a Connecticut village in 1789.

**Betsy Goes A-Visiting.** Jane Quigg. Oxford.

When Betsy's family had to go away she was sent to spend the winter with Great Aunt Cornelia in Hartford. It proved to be a fine arrangement for both.

**FLORIDA****An Omnibus of Adventure.** Ralph Henry Barbour. Farrar and Rhinehart.

"Pirates Of The Shoals" is a mystery of a stolen boat in Florida's inland waterways and a stowaway boy detective.

"The Crew of the Casco" is of the keen competition between the Casco and the Two Bees in a Main Coast freight war which is made more dangerous by fires and blackmail.

"Peril In The Swamp" tells of the pursuit of bank robbers, of hold-ups, kidnapping and the dangers of starvation.

**The Yearling.** Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Scribner.

A twelve-year-old boy shows himself to be a very fine companion to his father. Older children.

**GEORGIA****Jerome Anthony.** Eva Knox Evans. Putnam.

Jerome Anthony appears in the story of Arabella and Araminta. Jerome comes from country to Atlanta to live with an aunt. Used to rural simplicity, he cannot understand dinner brought from the store in a sack and knowing none of the people walking by the house.

**Step Twins.** Rose B. Knox. Doubleday Doran.

Angela comes from the big city to Lucedell, Georgia, to visit in the family of her mother's girlhood friend in her mother's home town. The summer vacation is spent with Daisy, Gustus, and John Wesley, a colored boy. A coon with no rings on his tail, a fat pony, detective meetings and the necessity of leading a double life confront Angela.

**Daddy Jake.** Joel Chandler Harris. Appleton-Century.

This book of plantation life in Georgia during the Civil War contains more Uncle Remus stories.

**On The Plantation.** Joel Chandler Harris. Appleton-Century.

This is partly autobiographical, the story of a Georgia boy's life before and during the Civil War.

**Dragon's Thunder.** Kenneth P. Kempton. Little.

Fighting the Spaniards with General Oglethorpe in the founding of New Georgia and dangerous adventures with pirates and their loot make this story interesting to boys.

**IDAHO**

(Most Westward Movement stories touch on Idaho.)

**ILLINOIS****The Totem of Black Hawk.** Everett McNeil. Dutton.

Gideon Clay is a lonely settler in Rock River Valley among hostile Indians at the time of the Black Hawk War.

**Vermilion Clay.** Florence Walton Taylor. Albert Whitman.

Elizabeth, little Peter, father and mother Grigsby move into the Illinois county to take over one of the salt licks along the Vermilion River in March, 1802. On their way in a covered wagon they pick up a little Miami Indian boy who has a broken arm, and is almost frozen to death.

**Once At Woodhall.** Frances Lowry Higgins. Harper.

Lowry and her eight brothers and sisters lived on Woodhall Farm in Illinois about eighty years ago. They were "Friends" and called each other "thee." Then came trouble—the raid of Morgan's men, the torchlight procession for Abraham Lincoln, a runaway slave, and the Civil War. 8 to 10.

**Abe Lincoln Grows Up.** Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace.

Away back in George Washington's time a John Lincoln lived and fought in Virginia and so did Abraham, his son. Abraham moved into Kentucky after Daniel Boone had recommended it and here his children grew up and scattered to Tennessee, Indiana, and Illinois after his death from an Indian's bullet. Tom settled in Kentucky and later married Nancy Hanks, the mother of little Abe.

### INDIANA

**Susan, Beware.** Mabel Leigh Hunt. Stokes.

Susan is a tomboy and so is always in trouble of some kind. Her brother who is always daring her to do something is no angel, nor are her boy cousins. Of course her mother is always warning, "Susan, beware." 10 to 12.

**Towpath Andy.** Florence Walton Taylor. Albert Whitman.

On the old Wabash and Erie canal Andy is a canal boy. This means that his job is to drive the horses along the towpath at the edge of the canal to pull the barges along. Doing this he has many exciting and interesting times. This all happened around 1849.

**The Boy Who Had No Birthday.** Mabel Leigh Hunt. Stokes.

Something happens which leaves David with no birthday. He lives in a toll-house on an Indiana highway and has no doubts as to what he wants to be when he grows up. He hops into the doctor's buggy whenever he goes through the toll-gate, he begins his chosen profession at ten years of age, and he finds his lost birthday.

**Runaway Linda.** Marjorie Hill Allee. Houghton Mifflin.

Linda Thornburgh, fifteen, and her brother Joel, ten, are orphans. Their uncle, who lives on a large farm in Indiana, offers to take care of them for the help they can give him with his work. Uncle Jethro proves to be a villain, though, and the children seek refuge with the

William Saints who are building a large new house. The whole family help them to solve their problems for a happy ending. 10 to 14.

**Judith Lankester.** Marjorie Hill Allee. Houghton Mifflin.

Judith, who has been living with her grandmother in Virginia, suddenly finds herself a part of the great migration to Indiana in the 1840's. She earns her keep in the Huff home by doing housework. Through the hardships of pioneering she changes from a spoiled, proud beauty to a very lovable, valuable person.

**Lucinda.** Mabel Leigh Hunt. Stokes.

In this story Lucinda grows from ten to fifteen, through the Civil War with her Quaker neighbors. Because she is warm hearted, full of fun, and loyal to her friends her favorite dream comes true.

### IOWA

**Augustus and The River.** LeGrand. Bobbs Merrill.

Augustus, Glorianna, Jupiter, and Ma and Pa live in a small shanty boat on the Mississippi. Augustus feels a hankering to go south like the wild ducks and he does—with the whole family. They get stuck on a mud flat, washed off by the waves of a big river steamer. The children get separated from Ma and Pa in the big flood. 10 to 14.

**The Story of Buffalo Bill.** Shannon Garst. Bobbs Merrill.

Young Bill Cody helped his father pick a spot for a new home in Salt Creek Valley, Kansas after they had sold their farm in Iowa to follow the gold rush to California and found that it wasn't as good an idea as it had seemed. Bill almost lost his uncle's fine chestnut pony when an Indian caught him napping. As a reward for saving the house, which the Indians have set on fire, he receives a wild young black pony of his very own. His dog Turk saves his two little sisters from a panther and Bill saves his father's life when he is stabbed by pro-slavery hoodlums. He braves Mr. Major for a job as extra on the freighting of goods to the soldiers from Leavenworth to the frontier forts. 10 to 12.

### KANSAS

**The Story of Buffalo Bill.** Same as above.

**The Little House On The Prairie.** Laura I. Wilder. Harper.

By mistake the Ingalls family settle on

Indian territory and are obliged to move on. They travel in a covered wagon and build a cabin on the Kansas prairie. They fight away wolves, chop logs, plow and plant and hunt ducks and turkeys for food.

### KENTUCKY

**Mountain Girl.** Genevieve Fox. Little, Brown.

Poor Sairy Ann—nothing but work and feuds and riding her white mule over the mountains. She longs to go to school, to learn something about the outside world, and finally does, against her family's wishes. This would be of interest to children in their teens.

**Honey Jane.** May Justus. Doubleday, Doran.

Honey Jane was a mixture of wild mountain McCrearys of Caney Creek and the respectable Millers who lived in the oldest house of Millerville. She had lived her twelve years with Grandma Miller but when the McCreary-Oliver feud broke out anew, Circuit Rider McCreary, hoping to break it up, moved back to Caney Creek, taking his family with him.

**Boone of the Wilderness.** Daniel McIntyre

Henderson. Dutton.

This story gives glimpses into the lives of Washington, Franklin and Braddock. It is of the pioneer settlement in Kentucky and the life of Daniel Boone.

**The Story of Nancy Hanks.** Ethel Calvert Phillips. Houghton Mifflin.

When Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, was five years old she traveled from Virginia, over the wilderness roads into the wilder country of Kentucky.

### LOUISIANA

**Belinda In Old New Orleans.** Gladys Blake. Appleton-Century.

Belinda Morton, a young Virginia girl, bound for New Orleans where she is to visit, finds the trip along the Wilderness Road and down the Mississippi a great adventure. It happens in the exciting days when General Jackson drives the British from the New Orleans country in the War of 1812. She meets a young man on the boat and discovers that a plot is being made against Jackson and the government. 12 to 16.

**The Gallant Lallanes.** Louise H. Guyol. Harper.

Living on an old, run-down plantation, this poor southern family find themselves faced with the problem of all getting out and

earning their bread and keep. Every member uses his own individual way to do this.

**The Story of Babette.** Ruth McEnery Stuart. Harper.

A little Creole girl is stolen from her New Orleans home at the time of the Mardi Gras and has to grow up among strangers.

**Toinette's Phillip.** Celia Viets Jamison. Century.

Two little orphans go through many hardships before they find good companions in the old Creole section of New Orleans.

**Shine.** Maria Van Vroooman. Dutton.

A little colored boy named Shine gets tired of always having to do as he is told, and of being too little to do this or that. He gets even with all the big folks when sugarin' off time comes and a little feller is needed to climb the tree. This takes place on a Louisiana levee.

### MAINE

**The Black Buccaneer.** Stephen W. Meader. Harcourt Brace.

A boy living on the Maine coast is kidnapped by pirates. His pal manages to get to him and the buried treasure.

**Douglas of Porcupine.** Louise Andrews Kent. Houghton Mifflin.

This exciting mystery story of buried treasure, and of a whole family winter-bound on an island off the Maine coast, will keep the reader wide awake.

**The Scalp Hunters.** Hubert V. Coryell. Harcourt, Brace.

Sam Hilton hates the cruelty of paying a bounty for scalps, but to rescue his younger brother Billy, who has been captured by the Indians, he has to participate in the fight at Saco Pond. With the help of Captain Lovewell's expedition, his Indian friend, Sosepsis, and his friend, Mike, Billy is rescued.

**A Truly Little Girl.** Nora Archibald Smith. Houghton Mifflin.

This is the story of the little girl, Truly, who plans and manages a hospital for animals. She has the co-operation of all her friends, pets and family. 8 to 10.

**Away Goes Sally.** Elizabeth Coatsworth. Macmillan.

Sally journeys from Massachusetts to Maine with her three aunts and two uncles in a little house on runners. The runners hit many bumps before they finally arrive in the spring.

**Five Bushel Farm.** Elizabeth Coatsworth. Macmillan.

Andrew comes to live with Sally and her aunts and uncles on Five Bushel Farm when hope is almost gone that his father will ever return from the sea.

**Polly's Secret.** Harriet A. Nash. Little, Brown.

Here Polly shows us that little girls can keep secrets and how it can be done.

**Hitty—Her First Hundred Years.** Rachel Lyman Field. Macmillan.

Hitty is only a doll, but a real-life character just the same. She is carved from a block of mountain ash. She writes her own story while living in the front window of an antique shop with Theobald as a companion.

#### MARYLAND

**Turkey Tale.** Frances Bacon. Oxford Press.

Oscar, a white turkey, just escaped being eaten as a Thanksgiving dinner when he was stolen from the storekeeper whose pet he was. Oscar has all kinds of trouble but finally finds himself safe in the poultry yard in the big zoo.

**Alanna.** Helen Coale Crew. Harper.

Alanna, a mischievous little Irish girl, gets a letter from her aunt and uncle living in America to come and live with them. She must cross the ocean all alone to join them in Baltimore.

**Day Before Yesterday.** Helen Coale Crew. Harper.

There are six Ellicott children, Hannah and five boys, plus little Tilly, a little colored girl. Hannah gets shut in the icehouse, an uncle appears in a circus, and Nelson and Harry have a snake killing contest.

**The Old Tobacco Shop.** William Bowen. Macmillan.

Freddie, as a little boy, was sent by his father to Toby Littleback, who kept the Old Tobacco Shop. He found a very good friend in Mr. Punch, the wooden man who stood outside its door. This is a true story of the author's own boyhood.

#### MASSACHUSETTS

**Peter Hale.** Julia Davis. Dutton.

An English orphan of twelve arrives in Jamestown in 1643 on the Royal Charles with a band of colonists. He possesses nothing but

a chest of clothing, four gold guineas, and a letter to an uncle. Before he reaches this uncle in Boston he is sent as a hostage to the Indians. He is returned by an old Dutch sea-captain.

**Penelope Ellen.** Ethel Parton. Viking.

Penny's mother sails with her father on his ship, the Mercator, around Cape Horn to be gone a whole year. She must go to live with her aunts and uncle in Newburyport. But it doesn't turn out so badly with so many exciting things happening such as the Boston Fair given to raise money for the Bunker Hill monument, torch-light parades, and a ride on the iron horse on one of its first trips from Newburyport to Boston.

**The Littlest House.** Elizabeth Coatsworth. Macmillan.

The littlest house stands on a bend in the road near the harbor, empty, except for a stove, and unwanted. Then Mark, Jean and Lydia, with the owner's consent, make it into a playhouse. When winter comes, it would be so mean to leave it all to itself, so the children still keep it company. 9 to 12.

**Humphrey.** Marjorie Flack. Doubleday.

The history and development of Massachusetts is cleverly told by Humphrey, a box-turtle. He was hatched from an egg beside a pond near the farm where Sara Ann and Thomas lived. They carry him to Salem in a stagecoach and show him clipper ships. He sees the earliest trains, telegraph poles, and a steamer automobile.

**Smuggler's Luck.** E. A. Stackpole. Wm. Morrow.

The Nantucket Islanders were in a tough spot during the Revolutionary War, between the Britishers and the Patriots. Timothy Pinkham finds himself in the thick of it with mystery, distrust, and strange happenings all around the neutral island.

**The Wind From Spain.** Marguerite Aspinwall. Century.

This mystery for girls has Nantucket Island for a setting.

**Downright Dency.** Caroline Dale Snedeker. Doubleday, Doran.

Dency is a little Quaker girl of one hundred years ago. She threw a stone at a friendless waif down at the wharves and spends the rest of the story getting him and herself out of troubles.

**Father's Gone A-Whaling.** Alice Cushing Gardiner. Doubleday, Doran.

In a Nantucket fishing village one hundred years ago we meet a family of children whose whole lives center around the sea and whaling.

**Cap'n Ezra, Privateer.** James D. Adams. Harcourt, Brace.

During the War of 1812, Billy and Dave go to Newburyport where they meet Cap'n Ezra, a privateer, who because of the war, takes them on his boat as midshipmen. For boys 12 to 16.

### MICHIGAN

**Little Moss Back Amelia.** Frances Margaret Fox. Dutton.

This is a true story of a little "mossback," a backwoods settler, near Petosky, Michigan. She made "mossback" dishes for the entire family, helped at the sugarbush, brought a squealy pig home, drove a team of oxen to town through a sleet storm with a load of carrots, and spent a night with her back to a tree. 6 to 12.

**Copper-Toed Boots.** Marguerite De Angeli. Doubleday, Doran.

Shad, a country boy who lived in central Michigan sixty years ago, desired more than anything else to have a dog of his very own and a pair of copper-toed boots. It wouldn't be a story if he didn't get them.

**Kaga's Brother.** M. I. Ross. Harper.

Lady Clinton was one of the first steam boats and young Matthew Steele was lucky enough to ride on it to Lake Superior and Sault Ste. Marie. He joined up with Captain Lewis and fought in the war between the Chippewas and Sioux with his Indian friend, Kaga.

**Secret of the Rosewood Box.** Helen Fuller Orten. Stokes.

Grandmother King insisted that she must take her rosewood bonnet box with her when the King family set out from New York to a new home in Michigan in 1880. Charley promised faithfully to keep his eye on it through the whole journey, but somehow it got lost. It made a great difference to the family when it finally was found.

**The Castaways of Pete's Patch.** Carroll Watson Rankin. Holt.

The girls living in Dandelion cottage on Lake Superior manage to have lots of excitement and fun.

### MINNESOTA

**On The Banks Of Plum Creek.** Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper.

The adventures of a little girl with her pioneering family in the Minnesota wheat country about sixty years ago make up this story of fires, floods, grasshoppers, and long blizzards.

**Swift Rivers.** Cornelia L. Meigs. Little, Brown.

Great trees float down the river from Minnesota to the Mississippi.

**Drusilla.** Emma L. Brock. Macmillan.

Drusilla tells her own story. She is a corn-husk doll made for little Sarah Hodgetts and is taken along when the family goes to Minnesota in a covered wagon. The trail is so rough that the doll is jolted off the wagon but is rescued by friendly Indians and after a time is returned to Sarah.

**Candle In The Mist.** Florence Crannell Means. Houghton Mifflin.

An orphan boy travels with the Grant family to Minnesota in 1871. He does not know who his mother is and none of them know where the doll that held the family fortune has been lost, though they suspect the Indians. Both mysteries are solved after many hardships and heartaches.

**Give Me The River.** Elizabeth Palmer. Scribner.

The children of the Swedish settlers pioneering in Minnesota have many thrilling experiences, but best of all is the coming of Jenny Lind whom the little girl in the family is going to be just like.

**Circus Boy.** Harriet F. Bunn. Macmillan.

Tim was born in a circus wagon as his parents were the Browninis, trapize performers. Later Tim and his mother must leave the circus because old Sheba, the mother of a baby elephant, takes a dislike to Tim for saving her baby from her in a jealous rage. They go to live with his grandfather in Minnesota on a farm. Tim is very lonesome till he finds a little brown bear in the woods which he trains and later takes back to the circus.

**By The Shores Of Silver Lake.** Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper.

When the railroads were building the final link with the west, the Ingalls moved from Minnesota to the Dakota Territory. The father had to earn money before he could find and get his homestead settled.

**Trailer Tracks.** Harriet F. Bunn. Macmillan.

The Ogilvie children found themselves orphans with no possessions but an old car and a trailer. Their luck seemed very poor until an old diary was found which told of their ancestors' traveling over the Santa Fe Trail and they decided to be pioneers, too. These ancestors had a homestead in New Mexico so off they go to locate it.

**Honk The Moose.** Phil Stong. Dodd, Mead.

Ivar and Waino were out hunting one winter day when they heard "Hawk—hawk" coming from the stable. It sounded like an automobile horn, but turned out to be a very hungry moose, so hungry that they just could not turn him out. Instead they fed him a ton of Ivar's father's very best hay.

**MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

(Not state)

**Mississippi River Boy.** Edwin L. Sabin. Lippincott.

Tony Lee goes from Pittsburgh down the Ohio and the Mississippi to New Orleans on a keel boat, working with the crew till he becomes a Cock-o'-the-Walk and can wear the red feather in his hat as the best of them can do. 10 to 16.

**Tony Of The Iron Hand.** Everett McNeil. Dutton.

This story is taken from an old French manuscript and tells of a boy's adventures with La Salle and Henri Tonty on their expedition in which they discovered the Mississippi River.

**Tah-Kee.** Carl Moon. Stokes.

Tah-Kee, with his puppy, is set adrift on the Big River in a water-proof basket.

**MISSOURI**

(A great many of the stories of the Westward Movement begin in or go through St. Louis, Missouri and might be used as representing this state.)

**The Sign Of The Buffalo Skull.** Peter O. Lamb. Stokes.

Missouri was "the far west" when Jim Bridger was a boy learning how to be an

Indian fighter, explorer, scout, and trapper. Before he earns the title of old mountain man he becomes well acquainted with frontier sports, trading, horse-stealing and living under the stars.

**No Road Too Long.** Hildegard Hawthorne. Longmans, Green.

Jonathan spent his youth getting ready to join Fremont's expedition. At seventeen he was an expert marksman, woodsman, and knew the language of the Delaware tribe. To prove himself fit for the expedition he had to win at the competitive trials at the target match. He joins Fremont at St. Louis and stays with him all the way to California through hardships, dangers, and disappointments. For older boys.

**Gay Soeurette.** Ada Claire Darby. Stokes.

"Soeurette," meaning little sister, was the name given the daughter of the commandant of St. Genevieve, a fur trading post in the exciting days just before the Louisiana Purchase. 8 to 12.

**MONTANA****Alder Gulch Gold.** James Schultz. Houghton Mifflin.

Young Henry Wilson was warned that Alder Gulch was "plumb dangerous" in 1863, the time of the historic gold rush. But, as it was rich, Henry, Uncle Ben, and Beaver Bill went on toward the Rockies and trouble. 12 to 16.

**Valiant, Dog Of The Timberline.** Jack O'Brien. Winston.

Valiant, a shephard dog, cares for the sheep of his master, Trent, and helps him to move the herd of three thousand from Wyoming to Montana.

**Grasshopper Gold.** Grace and Olive Barnett. Oxford.

When Jonathan's family arrived at Uncle Dave's cabin in Bannock, Montana, they found he had disappeared, but they settled in the cabin, doing the best they could to make it seem like home. Besides living through a buffalo stampede, an Indian attack and the long voyage on the Missouri, they make two important discoveries.

(To be continued)

# Democracy, 1903 Model

## TEACHING ENGLISH TO FOREIGN CHILDREN

MABEL F. RICE

*Director of Elementary Education, Whittier College  
Whittier, California*

**W**E'VE GOT a new pupil, Teacher! She's seven years old and she can't speak a word of English!"

It was "before school" in one of those one-room country schools in the early part of the century. "Teacher" looked up a little wearily from the register over which she had been working in which were recorded the names of more than fifty pupils, ranging in age from six to sixteen. A dozen fresh faced country children were crowding about her desk, acting as an escort for the new pupil. Teacher's eyes may have been a little tired but her smile was friendly as she looked at the newcomer.

"What is your name, little girl?" she asked kindly.

The tow-headed new pupil stared at her with round uncomprehending eyes.

"She can't understand a word of English either, Teacher," volunteered one of the pupils eagerly. "She's a cousin of the Fenski children and she's just come to this country. Her name is Sophie."

"Sophie! That's a pretty name," said Teacher. Then looking directly at the pupil she said, "Say 'Sophie.'"

No answer.

"Say 'Sophie,'" repeated Teacher more distinctly.

Still no answer.

"Say 'Sophie.'" This time Teacher enunciated each word very clearly. She didn't raise her voice.

The new pupil understood that something was expected of her. Back came the words echoed perfectly, "Say-Sophie!"

The children shouted with laughter. Sophie inferred that she had said something very clever. She joined in the laughter and repeated gleefully, "Say-Sophie! Say-Sophie! Say-Sophie!"

"You'll have to teach her English, Teacher," said one of the older pupils.

"We shall have to teach her English," corrected Teacher with gentle emphasis. "There are more than fifty of us you know, and I won't have much time to teach one little girl to speak English. But you can all help! Jerry, ring the bell and we'll start this morning."

The pupils rushed to their seats with far more than the usual alacrity. Sophie was given a seat in front. All eyes were fixed upon her and the teacher.

"How shall we start?" asked Teacher.

One of the big boys in a back seat had a suggestion. "We'll have to start with easy words, things she can see like 'book,'" he said. He picked up his sixth reader, pointed to it and said distinctly to Sophie, "book."

She stared at it and at him. The other children caught the idea. Ellen held up her arithmetic. "Book. Say 'book.'"

"You mustn't say 'Say book,'" warned Mary Jane frowning, "or she will think it's 'say-book' too." Ellen tried again. "Book," she said.

Sophie was watching closely. She looked around the room, then she jumped from her seat, ran to the front of the room and placed both hands on the big dictionary. "Book!" she laughed.

The fifty-odd pupils clapped their hands and cheered with joy. Sophie was learning English.

"She *ran* to the dictionary," exclaimed Jerry excitedly. "Let's teach her the word 'run.' May I be teacher?" Teacher nodded.

Jerry stood in front of the class. He pointed to Tommy. "Run!" he said. Tommy ran to the blackboard and back. "Run," said the play-teacher to Jimmie. Jimmie ran to the window and back. Jerry pointed to Sophie. "Run," he said. Sophie merely stared at him.

Jerry's young face clouded. "We'll have to try again," he said. Pointing to Russell he said "run" and Russell ran. So did Esther and Flora. Then he pointed again to Sophie. "Run," he said, and to the great delight of the pupils, Sophie ran to the door and back.

"We might teach her the difference between 'run' and 'walk,'" volunteered Esther.

"Would you like to try?" the teacher suggested, and Esther needed no second urging.

"Walk," said teacher Esther to Jerry. Stiffly and sedately Jerry marched to the board. "Run," said the teacher, and he ran back.

With Esther proudly giving directions like a ringmaster cracking a whip, several other children responded to the order to alternately walk and run. When Sophie's turn came she repeated both words and followed the order.

Teacher was about to call a halt for that morning. "That was good, Sophie," she said placing a hand kindly on Sophie's smooth blond braids. Sophie seemed to understand the smile and the gesture, if not the words, and she beamed happily. With her two hands she admiringly patted Teacher's bright red woolen dress.

"She likes red," said Lola eagerly. "May we teach her just one more word? May we teach her 'red'?" Teacher consented.

Touching the pretty red dress, Lola said "red."

Sophie responded at once. She held out the skirt of her own little brown dress and said "red."

Here was a problem. "She thinks you mean dress," said Jackie.

"I have *red* beads," said tall Lizzie. She touched them and distinctly repeated "red." Henry produced a very red apple from his desk, one not originally intended for so public a service. "Red," he said to Sophie as he held it up.

The children looked about the drab school room for more red, but Sophie was quicker than they were. She pointed to the blossom of the potted geranium in the window and exclaimed, "Red!" The children applauded, Teacher called the chart class to stand, and Sophie's first lesson was over.

"This is the most fun we've had all year," agreed everyone happily.

"This was easy, Teacher," said Lizzie, "but how are we going to teach her words like 'what' and 'how' and 'when' and 'tomorrow'—words you can't see or act out?"

The pupils were puzzled. Finally someone said, "She'll just have to catch on as she listens to us," and Teacher had no better suggestion.

It was 1903, and Teacher had never heard of "problem children" though she probably had a number who might have qualified. She knew nothing of "pupil-initiated activities." But what might have been Teacher's problem had become an all-school enterprise with all the activities initiated by the pupils. At recess, at noon, going to and from school, Sophie was taught English, taught the letters, taught to count, taught to spell c-a-t, and using the boy's marbles to say, "two plus two, the sum of which is four."

Faced with a practical problem, the pupils of the Flintville school quite unconsciously put into practice some of the important principles of teaching English to foreign children. They began with concrete objects which Sophie could see. They used action words, they and she could dramatize. They capitalized on the liking of every child, and particularly of the foreign child, for bright colors. That very first day they learned the necessity for repetition and for patience. Although they had never heard of psychology, from the very beginning spontaneously they gave Sophie the thrill and the resulting drive which follows success. Never once did Sophie feel inferior. If she failed, the self-appointed teachers felt that it was they who had failed, not Sophie. They found that sometimes a word taught one day was forgotten the next and had to be re-taught. They learned, too, that when too many new things were presented to her at one time, Sophie became confused and didn't learn anything. They struggled all year with words you "couldn't see or act out." There was that gala day when in the midst of a game someone incidentally called Sophie's name and she looked up and asked "What?" "She has learned 'what!'" they all exclaimed. "She couldn't see 'what.' She just caught on from listening to us."

Then there was that dark day when Sophie said "aint." The pupils gasped in horror. "Teacher, Sophie said 'aint'! We never taught her to say 'aint.' She must have learned that from listening to us too. Who in this school says 'aint'?"

The pupil-initiated inquisition which followed left all culprits feeling as though they had swallowed some of Alice's magic potion and were but nine inches high.

On the last day of school there was the inevitable program. Each pupil who stepped in front of the school to sing a

song or speak a piece was certain of parental approbation at least. But when Sophie walked sedately to the front of the room, her starched dress and her yellow pig-tails standing out stiffly, fifty pairs of eyes, filled with anxiety and concern, followed her. When Sophie spoke "Mary had a little lamb" in stilted but very presentable English, fifty young faces beamed with pride.

The years have passed. The teaching of foreign children is no longer an incidental affair with an odd child here and there. It has become a major problem and a matter of mass education in many sections of the country. There are entire rooms, entire buildings, entire school systems devoted exclusively to the teaching of foreign children. But the fundamental principles and techniques are the same as those her classmates used with Sophie in 1903.

In an all-Mexican school every class is an English class, be the topic arithmetic, social studies, science, or the construction period. Every playground activity, every school party is a language exercise in which the child who speaks English is co-instructor with Teacher—who of course is no longer "Teacher," but "Miss Smith." Every mother's meeting is a language laboratory.

Visitors to the Brooklyn Avenue School in Los Angeles with its 1200 Mexican children may see a practical application of the plan. From the moment the first child appears on the playground in the morning until the last parent leaves in the evening the entire plant is a work-shop in the languages and customs of the adopted country. In other Los Angeles County schools, similar work is carried on.

It is Democracy, 1941 model, functioning in a practical situation. It is plain horse sense.

# Cultivating A Taste For Non-Fiction

RUTH A. PUTNAM

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**A**SURVEY of the shelves in our reading room revealed that *Pinnochio* and *Silver Chief, Dog of the North* were sorely in need of a trip to the bindery while *Clear Track Ahead* and other books of an informational type looked suspiciously new. This seemed significant and a check-up on children's reading during a free-reading period as well as a talk with a children's librarian in the public library disclosed the same disconcerting situation: children, if left to their own choice, were reading fiction, almost exclusively. Boys and girls are proverbially creatures of curiosity; and some of the best writing done for children recently has been of the non-fiction type, presumably to aid in satisfying their curiosity. Why this lack of interest in what should be a logical field for juvenile reading and what can be done about it? These questions presented a real challenge.

Carefully planned book introductions by the teacher aroused a brief flicker of interest which soon died out. Such "pump-priming" techniques could not be relied upon to cultivate a permanent taste for informational or non-fiction reading.

The next attack on the problem proved more successful, probably because it was less artificial and designed to originate from the other side of the teacher's desk. An opportunity was provided for the children to list on slips of paper, prepared for the purpose, topics, subjects, or questions about which they would like to find

information. Response was spontaneous and almost overwhelming. Subjects listed varied from "where babies come from" to "spiders" and "the New Deal."

An inexpensive card file was obtained and subject headings for most of the topics in which the children had shown an interest were made for it. Reading texts, periodicals such as *The Weekly Reader* and the *Junior Red Cross News*, as well as library books were scanned for material to be placed under these subject headings. Care was taken to list only the most worthwhile and interesting material. A special selection of well-illustrated non-fiction books such as *Extra! Extra!* and *Movies on Parade* was borrowed from the Public Library as additional material.

A casual announcement was then made by the teacher to the effect that the information concerning the topics in which they had expressd an interest was now available and the use of the card file in quickly locating this information was demonstrated. The novelty of looking up material for themselves, material in which they were interested for reasons of their own, appealed to the children at once. They soon found out that no one ever suggested that they look up *anything* in the file. When they used it, it was not because some teacher thought that they *might* be—or *should* be—interested in a particular topic, but simply because they really *were* interested. And they liked it!

Using the card file quickly became one of the most popular features of free reading periods, a popularity which it still

enjoys in spite of the fact of it was introduced more than a year ago. During the year the file has grown considerably, but not because of any additions made by the teacher. A free reading period seldom goes by without a child proudly announcing that he has found unlisted material on some special topic. The subject headings have grown in number also. A few weeks ago a fifth grade group evidenced much interest in a study of irrigation carried on in the social science room, and material on irrigation was added to the file by popular request of the children—and not the social science teacher.

A recent check of individual preferences during a sixth grade free reading period showed that over a third of the class read some non-fiction during the period—a most heartening observation in view of the situation existing previously.

#### SUBJECT FILE (Sample entries)

##### AVIATION

*Pathway to Reading VI p. 373  
(Wright Bros.)  
Elson Basic V p. 15 (Byrd)  
Story Book of Aircraft*

##### ARTISTS

*Tales and Travel p. 177 (Rosa Bonheur)*

##### AUTOMOBILES

*Tales and Travel p. 346  
Weekly Reader IV Nov. 1 - 5, 1937  
Treasure Trove p. 61 (Henry Ford)  
New Pathway to Reading IV p. 308  
(Henry Ford)*

##### BANANAS

*Green and Gold  
Treasure Trove p. 240  
Follett Picture Story of Foods*

##### BASEBALL

*Big Baseball Book for Boys*

##### COAL

*Story Book of Coal  
Child Library IV p. 296*

##### CORN

*Then and Now p. 275  
Junior Red Cross News Nov. 1940*

##### COTTON

*Cotton Book  
Treasure Trove p. 313  
Pathway to Reading VI p. 210*

##### FISHING

*Elson Basic IV p. 248  
Let's Go Fishing  
Do You Know About Fishes?*

##### FIRE

*Fire Fighters  
Fire Engine Book*

##### IRRIGATION

*Exploring New Fields p. 349*

##### INVENTIONS AND INVENTORS

*Treasure Trove p. 313 (Cotton Gin)  
Elson Basic IV p. 217 (Franklin's Iron Stove)  
Elson Basic VI p. 293 (Edison)  
Then and Now p. 241 (Edison)*

##### INDIANS

*Caravan p. 293; p. 310  
Near and Far pp. 71, 75, 79, 86 and 95*

##### KITES

*Then and Now p. 305; p. 311*

##### MUSIC

*Short Stories of American Music  
New Pathway to Reading IV p. 339 (Handel)  
Treasure Trove p. 127*

##### ORANGES

*Elson Basic IV p. 226  
Follett Picture Story of Foods*

##### PAPER

*Paper Book  
Treasure Trove p. 135*

##### POLICEMEN

*Treasure Trove p. 135  
Policeman*

##### RUBBER

*Rubber Book  
Let's Travel On p. 138*

##### SNAKES

*Creepers and Sliders  
Then and Now p. 19*

# Group Reading

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*Hunter College  
New York City*

THROUGHOUT THE city of New York many of the elementary teachers are dividing their classes for reading into three groups, slow, average and superior. This does not sound wholesome. When we begin to tag or label children, they sense immediately the limitation we place upon them, and the freedom and joy we wish to develop in our classes is thereby checked. Loading the child with too many mechanics of teaching is to make a clerk of him rather than a student. There must be relaxation, interest and freedom in a reading period.

What could be suggested to take the place of this division of three groups? Just this: take an average class of thirty or thirty-two, divide this class into groups of three or four, never more than five in a group. Select the groups at random, calling them groups one, two, three etc. or you may call them teams, permitting the groups to select team names. Have each group select a chairman who will direct the oral reading and assist with difficult words. If all are of the same reading level, there will not be the challenge that there would be with a heterogeneous grouping.

All groups should be reading aloud at the same time. At first, there will no doubt be more noise than later when they become more familiar with the plan. Each child should have one or two opportunities to read aloud to his group during one reading period; it is only by reading that he will learn to read. Oral reading is important in the early elementary years; silent reading increases in importance as the child advances and dis-

covers the increasing need for factual reading. With the advance of radio and its many fields of activity, teachers will find it more and more necessary to stress the importance of oral reading. Silent reading however is not neglected in this plan. The check which the teacher will use at the end of the oral reading session will call for silent reading. Many teachers permit the groups completing the day's assignment to indulge in leisure reading, which would be entirely silent reading.

When a group completes the reading of the story and each child has read once or twice, the teacher should have some sort of a check prepared for them so that she will know just about what each child has derived from that day's lesson. This may be questions about the story written on separate slips of paper and given to each child. The pupil writes the answers in his note-book then reads them aloud to his group for criticism; at times the teacher listens in as a check on her own teaching. The check may be a request for the drawing of some character or some object in the story; it may be an outline drawing that asks for colors mentioned in the story; it can be a map, a word game or any device the teacher has used and found successful.

The student-teachers like the plan and have been very successful in using it. The members of the evening session class are experienced teachers; one was especially enthusiastic about it. Her assistant principal, after observing her teaching a reading lesson by this plan, commented

on the independence that it developed in young children.

One of the student-teachers had an interesting experience. She had a group of gypsy boys about fifteen years of age to whom she was trying to teach reading, using Peter Rabbit stories. The boys were bored and she was discouraged. At the end of the period an effort was made to have her understand that she was *not* teaching reading; all they were doing was pronouncing words on a page with no expression or meaning to the entire experience.

"But what shall I do?" the young teacher asked. "They rebel against these Peter Rabbit stories, yet this is the only material on their reading level." The problem was thrown right back to her: What is the interest of gypsies? Where have you looked for other reading material? What other plans have you thought of to correct this?

A few days later she stopped in the office and told me she was experimenting; one could tell from her spirit that whatever she was doing was bringing results.

She had discovered that gypsies liked to travel and to read about anything that moves on wheels, so the class discarded their readers and started making their own story book called "Gypsy Travels." They would talk about how you prepare to leave the city and start on the road, what you take with you, how many are in the party, and the like. After such lively motivation the teacher would write what they had been saying on the board, asking for a sentence at a time, thus building a connected story. After that day's story had been written on one board she would start to copy it on another, asking different children to read a sentence at a time for her. This is reading. Later they would copy what they had

developed that day into their own notebooks and still later into booklets that they were making. They would read these sentences to one another and then to the entire group and finally to the teacher. All this is reading on their own level and within their own interest.

There was a noticeable change in that group; before it had been dull and uninteresting, now it was wide awake, interested and participating enthusiastically. They brought pictures of themselves and members of their families to put into their books so that they could have them ready for Christmas.

Upon inquiring about stories that were read to them the student-teacher discovered that the gypsy boys did not like any of the stories. Not one story was about gypsies, yet in that school there was a very large gypsy element. A search for gypsy stories revealed several good ones: *The Gypsy Caravan* by Howard Pease<sup>1</sup> who writes so many lively stories for children, *Whistler's Van* by Jones,<sup>2</sup> *Shawl With the Silver Bells* by Crew,<sup>3</sup> and *Tara, Daughter of the Gypsies* by Kahmann.<sup>4</sup> This last tells of a beautiful violinist who rejects a position with a good salary because she knows that her people should live in the open if they are to be well and happy. It is something fine to leave with children the idea that happiness lies not in material wealth but in serving the best interest of all. The student-teacher read the delightful story called *Senfi, the Gypsy Goat*<sup>5</sup> to the group just before the holidays; they loved it and asked to have it read several times.

If all teachers would accept every problem which confronts them as a challenge to be met, it would give teaching a

<sup>1</sup> Doubleday, Doran. \$2.00

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Jones. Viking. \$2.00

<sup>3</sup> Helen Coale Crew. Macmillan. \$1.00

<sup>4</sup> Chesley Kahmann. Random House. \$2.00

<sup>5</sup> Chesley Kahmann. Random House. \$2.00; also *Jasper, the Gypsy Dog*, by Chesley Kahmann. Random House. \$1.50

spirit of exploration and experimentation. How much better it has been for that student-teacher to have found a solution for the reading difficulty of that group of interesting gypsy boys than to have gone

on calling them slow and accepting a defeatist attitude in regard to their reading difficulty! Froebel has given us the key; he tells us to see in every child the possibility of the perfect man.

### THE WHITE ISLE

(Continued from page 207)

plete faith in the original British Christianity. And out of this faith grew the the whole latter part of my book.

For of course I went to Glastonbury where Joseph of Aramathea becomes real and unmistakable. It was raining the day I arrived in Glastonbury. And it was raining on that long ago day when my Roman Lavinia arrived there. But the weather had to clear. I made it clear, having complete charge at the time. And with that clearing the whole scene of the tiny wattled church, the early Christian congregation, the hymns and the Grail itself came clear. All for Lavinia to see.

This took weeks, even months of study to assure the details, to begin to step on certain ground. And it is all so simple and short as I wrote it at last.

Thus I came to the end of the *White Isle* manuscript with far more regret I am sure than any reader comes to the end of the book and closes the last chapter.

### BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BY MRS. SNEDEKER

**The Spartan.** Illus. Doubleday, Doran, 1912.  
\$2.00.

**The Perilous Seat.** Illus. Doubleday, Doran, 1923. \$2.00.

**Theras and His Town.** Illus. by M. W. Haring. Doubleday, Doran, 1924. \$2.00.

**Downright Dency.** Illus. by Maginal Wright Barney. Doubleday, Doran, 1927. \$2.00.

**The Beckoning Road.** Illus. by Manning de V. Lee. Doubleday, Doran, 1929. \$2.00.

**The Black Arrowhead.** Illus. by Manning de V. Lee. Doubleday, Doran, 1929. \$2.00.

**Town of the Fearless.** Illus. by Manning de V. Lee. Doubleday, Doran, 1931. \$2.50.

**The Forgotten Daughter.** Illus. by Dorothy P. Lathrop. Doubleday, Doran, 1933. \$2.00.

**Uncharted Ways.** Illus. by Manning de V. Lee. Doubleday, Doran, 1935. \$2.00.

**The White Isle.** Illus. by Fritz Kredel. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.00.

### MR. NEWBERY SAVES THE DAY

(Continued from page 215)

**MANAGER:** The Book Shop calling.

Hello, hello, Mr. Secretary?

Have you any more books? (Pause.)

I'll be over to see.

(Comes out in a great hurry from behind his desk. Brushes his hair and arranges his tie.)

**MANAGER:** (to Clerk) Bring on my coat.

(Clerk rushes in with his coat and helps him get into it.) -

**MANAGER:** Bring on my hat.

(Secretary brings it and put it on his head.)

**MANAGER:** We need more books

And that's that.

(He starts for the door and the Clerk and Secretary follow.)

**SECRETARY AND CLERK:** (Repeat until they are off stage.)

And that's that

Yes, that's that.

# With the New Books for Children

J. L. CERTAIN

## PICTURE AND EASY BOOKS

**Paddle-to-the-Sea.** Written and illus. by Holling Clancy Holling. Houghton Mifflin, 1941. \$2.00.

Strikingly beautiful drawings in black-and-white and in rich color illustrate this story of a tiny canoe and paddle-man, carved from pine by an Indian boy, and of its journey from the Lake Nipigon country to the Atlantic and to France. "You will go with the water and you will have adventures that I would like to have," the boy tells his little wooden figure as he sets him on a snowbank.

Narrative and pictures convey a sense of the tremendous sweep of the lake country. The story is realistic—there is no whimsy nor fantasy, and the pictures are magnificent. Excellent from every angle.

**Make Way for Ducklings.** By Robert McCloskey. Viking Press, 1941. \$2.00.

The author of the imitable *Lentil* has done it again! This time it is a story of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard and their efforts to bring up a family in Boston. Text, pictures and spirits are absolutely true to Boston policemen, Boston people, Boston traffic and to ducks. It is one of the best picture books of the year for young children, but it would be a shame to keep it away from the growing-ups and the grown-ups.

**An American A B C.** By Maud and Miska Petersham. Illus. in color by the authors. Macmillan, 1941. \$2.00.

From "A is for America, the land I love," to "Z is for zeal, an American trait," this volume deals with peaceful American subjects—Jamestown, Quakers (an especially beautiful drawing), Simon Bolivar, and Thanksgiving. Brief text accompanies each illustration. This book should be popular because of its response to the growing appreciation of our own heritage, and because of its beautiful pictures.

**The Ant and the Grasshopper Sail Away.** Written and illus. by Elsie Bindrum. Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard, 1941. \$1.00.

A picture book which tells, in simple, hand-lettered text, of the adventures of two small creatures on a voyage to the city. There they find "there's no place for anything little" and so are glad to return home.

**Ching-Li.** By Martha Lee Poston. Pictures by Weda Yap. Thos. Nelson, 1941. \$1.50.

Ching-Li is a Chinese Epaminondas; he meets each situation with the behavior suitable to the one he has encountered just previously. Since the story is folklore, it has the sharp, authentic humor of folk literature—a humor which can be enjoyed by any nationality. This means that it is an excellent story to read aloud or tell to children six to eight years old. The author was born

and grew up in China, and Weda Yap, the illustrator, also knows the country well.

**Crybaby Calf.** By Helen and Alf Evers. Illus. by the authors. Rand McNally, 1941. 50c.

The old admonitory story reappears in present-day children's books in attractive form. This is an engaging and humorous little yarn for small children.

**Presents for Lupe.** By Dorothy P. Lathrop. Illustrated by the author. Macmillan, 1940. \$2.00.

Dorothy Lathrop's beautiful drawings make this account of a homesick South American squirrel a distinguished book. Miss Lathrop draws animals with affectionate accuracy, from living models, and the full-page pictures of the little red squirrel, regaling herself with strange tropical fruits, are delights of color, design, and exactness.

The narrative tells of the efforts of Lupe's owners to make her happy. They offer her one South American product after another, but she takes little interest until she receives a gourd bowl, and makes it into a house for herself. Children 6-10.

**The Rabbits' Revenge.** Written and illus. by Kurt Wiese. Coward-McCann, 1940. \$1.50.

There is a touch of Uncle Remus here—the deep laughter that underlies every story in which the weak



From *Make Way for Ducklings*, by Robert McCloskey. Viking.

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

and innocent out-smart the crafty and strong. Old Man Shivers sets out to shoot himself a suit a rabbit-fur. His intentions are made known to the rabbits who, with admirable strategy and organization, undermine his house so that it floats away down the river. In the end, the rabbits and other animals celebrate, and Old Man Shivers settles for a woollen suit.

The pictures are superlatively funny—the earnest faces of the digging rabbits, their jubilant expressions at the success of their scheme, and their fear of the fox and weasel are all portrayed with accuracy and a sense of drama.

**Wings Over the Woodshed.** A Read-it-Yourself Story. By Margaret Friskey. Illus. by Lucia Patton. Albert Whitman, 1941. \$1.00.

The narrative deals with the efforts of a group of children to construct an airplane, and the adventures that follow. There is well-organized plot, and interesting action. Second-grade children enjoyed hearing it read aloud, but since the vocabulary of 150 words is taken from the Kindergarten Pre-school list, it is probable that many children in the second and third grades can read it by themselves.

**Fancy Be Good.** Written and illus. by Audrey Chalmers. Viking, 1941. \$1.00.

A picture-story-book about a good and a bad kitten, and how the latter, Fancy, was reformed and all day was "so good that by night time she was simply exhausted."

**A Hundred Tuftys.** Story by Jean Lilly. Pictures by Tibor Gergely. Dutton, 1940. \$1.50.

Because it is an amusing variation on a familiar theme, little children should enjoy this story of the toys who had their photographs taken. Instead of a half-dozen prints, Tufty, the bear, orders a hundred of himself, and with the industry of a campaign manager, delivers them to every household on Washington Square, and every newspaper in town.

Pictures are in two colors, almost full-page size. Type lines are too long for little people.

## FICTION

**Lad With a Whistle.** By Carol Ryrie Brink. Illus. by Robert Ball. Macmillan, 1941. \$2.00.

Alone, with insubordinate and dishonest servants, the two Kirkness children needed the protection of the piper lad, Rob McFarland, so strangely provided for them by their grandfather. Mystery, treachery, imprisonment and escape, secret rooms, loyalty, and the romantic old Jacobite traditions combine to make this story of Scotland in 1810 a fine, exciting tale. Walter Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd enter the story briefly. Highly recommended.

**The Camp at Westlands.** By Marjorie Hill Allee. Illus. by Erick Berry. Houghton Mifflin, 1941. \$2.00. Mrs. Allee is particularly successful in depicting



From *Fancy Be Good*, by  
Audrey Chalmers. Viking.

group life; the interaction of individuals, changing and modifying each other and creating a new entity—the group.

This novel tells of a volunteer work-camp in the Pennsylvania coal country. What plot there is arises naturally from character and situation. Two romances add interest for the teen-age girl, and are well handled. Excellent.

**Delecta Ann, the Circuit Rider's Daughter.** Written and illus. by Myra Lockwood. Dutton, 1941. \$2.00.

Delecta Ann's father felt a "call" to leave his pastorate in the comfortable little city of Detroit in the 1840's, and to go to the Iowa frontier. The family face uncomfortable days on the road, and in Iowa, trouble over land-grabbers, blizzards, and, as a climax, a terrible prairie fire.

The story is well-told, full of excitement, and always true to the developing character and courage of the girl. For boys and girls 11 to 13.

**Me and the General.** By Adelaide H. and John C. Wonsetler. Illus. by the authors. Knopf, 1941. \$2.00.

The War of 1812 in the region of Lake Erie furnishes the background. The red-haired orphan, Powderhorn, is stolen from the cabin of his guardian by two Mohawk warriors, scouts for the British. They regard the waif as "good medicine," adopt him, and take him to the British fort at Amherstburg.

Powderhorn is greatly impressed by the military smartness of the British garrison, and for a time for-

gets his own country. He discovers, however, when the general allows the Algonquins to torture a white prisoner at the stake, that his sympathies are American. Young Powderhorn succeeds in freeing the prisoner, none other than old Biscuit, his foster father, and in warning the American forces at Fort Stephenson of British movements.

The theme—a lapse from, and later return to loyalty—is a difficult one to handle, requiring considerable tact and understanding of psychology, and it is well presented. There is no firm statement of the

In the present volume, Mrs. de Angeli tells a story of Philadelphia Quakers in the 1850's. Hannah lets "Old Spotty" (Gammy's name for Satan) talk to her rather often, particularly when she sees the flower-decked bonnets and rustling silks of those who are not Friends. She comes to learn, though, what the Quaker bonnet stands for, and is proud to wear it.

Like much of Mrs. de Angeli's writing, the book is rich in sensory stimuli. The red-brick sidewalks strewn with the fallen poplar-leaves of midsummer, the whirling snow of a March blizzard, the colors of the fish market, the cries of the hucksters (a number of these are given with delightful effect) all give depth and reality to the story of the gentle society of the old city.

The illustrations are especially lovely. Instead of the pale icy colors of the Gape peninsula (in *Petite Suzanne*) she uses browns, reds, and lavenders that suggest the rich, decorous setting. Especially beautiful are the faces of Quaker women at First Day Meeting.

#### **The Land He Loved. A Story of Old Naragansett.**

By Elizabeth Emmett. Illus. by Lydia H. Parmelee. MacMillan, 1940. \$2.00.

Tim, a waif from London, was "bound out" against his will, to Robert Throckmorton of Rhode Island, in the year 1726. The boy was sullen, resentful, and homesick for London's streets and theatres. With the help of young Penelope Throckmorton, he finally comes to love the country, and when he has a chance to return to London, he lets it pass, preferring to remain in the New World.

**Smoky House.** By Elizabeth Goudge. Illus. by Richard Floethe. Coward McCann, 1940. \$2.00.

Those familiar with Mrs. Goudge's novels for adults can predict the style and content of this book for children. The story, written with the author's usual sensitiveness to form, is a highly sentimentalized account of smugglers, an unhappy villain, Little People, praying dogs, and angels. This is a pity, for with a little less softness, a little sharp humor as a corrective, this would have been a superior story for children.

**Pegeen.** Written and illus. by Hilda van Stockum. Viking, 1941. \$2.00.

The story is a continuation of *Francie on the Run*, and *The Cottage at Bantry Bay*. The O'Sullivans adopt Pegeen, after her granny dies and leaves her alone, and much mischief do Liam and Francie and Pegeen get into. The lives of these lovable people are good reading for children of 9 to 12.

**Pepperfoot of Thursday Market.** By Robert Davis. Illus. by Cyrus Le Roy Baldridge. Holiday House, 1941. \$2.00.

Three little Berber boys of the High Atlas mountains in northwestern Africa, and their pet, an Egyptian donkey, will interest American boys and girls of 8 to 12.



From *Cbing-Li*. By Martha Lee Poston. Nelson.

American cause, however, and Powderhorn is turned from British partisanship only by disappointment in one character—the general. Nevertheless, escapes, battles, Indian tortures, and spies furnish enough excitement to hold any reader's attention.

The typography and make up are pleasing. Illustrations, and especially the symbolic chapter-headings (explained in an appendix) are unusually in harmony with the text.

**Thee, Hannah!** Written and illus. by Marguerite de Angeli. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.00.

It becomes increasingly evident that Mrs. de Angeli is not only an artist of rare insight, but a person of very wide sympathies. She has portrayed with great fidelity, children as diverse as *Petite Suzanne*, of the Gaspe, a little boy in a Michigan town of the last century (*Copper-toed Boots*) Mennonite children (*Hennier's Lydia*) and realistic little moderns like Ted and Nina.

The boys help Cousin You-seff cut rushes for a new house, capture and sell a great snake, Pepperfoot the donkey apprehends a thief, the boys steal eagle eggs, and share the reward for killing a panther. Best and most exciting of their adventures is that with the French Foreign Legion. The book has action, absorbing atmosphere, good, because inconspicuous, literary style, and beautiful format.



From *Lad with a Whistle*, by Carol Ryrie Brink. Macmillan.

**The White Isle.** By Caroline Dale Snedeker. Illus. by Fritz Kredel. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.00.

The story, for girls in their 'teens, tells of a Roman family who, because they are out of favor with the Emperor Hadrian, are sent to far-away Britannia. Although Favonius Claudius, the father, is *legatus curidicus*, the appointment is practically a sentence of exile. Lavinia, the daughter, is the central character.

Almost half the book is given over to the journey to Britain—a journey bound to be eventful despite the *Pax Romana*. The reader's interest is intensified at the account of the establishment of a Roman home at Corinium (Cirencester) in Britain, and excitement, tragedy, and romance are crowded into the last 70 pages.

The real theme of the book is First Century Christianity in England. This subject is rich in legendary and poetic beauty, centering as it does around Glastonbury (the Roman Avalonia).

The story is excellent, distinguished in style, and based upon much scholarly research.

**Kersti and Saint Nicholas.** Written and illus. by Hilda van Stockum. Viking, 1940. \$2.00.

In text and in pictures—black and white, and colored—is told the story of this naughty little Dutch girl. But naughty or not, Kersti is amusing and lovable, and gets presents from Saint Nicholas when it is all too apparent that she deserves only a bundle of switches.

The book gives a lively picture of Dutch family life—a subject, incidentally, esteemed worthy by some very great artists. Children will be amused by the adventures, real and dream, of the littlest van Disselen sister.

**Little Jungle Village.** By JoBesse McElveen Waldeck. Illus. by Katharine von Dombrowski. Viking, 1940.

A story of two children of the Guiana jungles, Arawak Indians, who go off by themselves, build a hut and a "woodskin" or canoe, and live in the jungle. The story is not weakened by sentimentality; the characters are frankly "savages," and are not prettied up for effect. But back of this truthfulness is a force of understanding and sympathy that makes the book valuable.

**Then Came Adventure.** Written and illus. by Emma L. Brock. Knopf, 1941. \$2.00.

The Torgersen and the MacPherson children love their Lake Superior country; but the Torgersen's prefer the stormy lake, while Marty MacPherson longs for the treacherous, beautiful forest. Naturally, these affections, which are the author's own, enrich the book.

As a story, however, it is inferior to Miss Brock's narratives for young children. There is little plot development; the mystery of the visiting woman-scientist never puzzles the reader, and it is solved for the other characters on page 54. Action consists of a stormy day (on land) and getting lost in the forest.

The characters of grandmother and grandfather Torgersen, of Peder, and of Brit are well-drawn.

**Timmy, the Dog that Was Different.** Story by Eleanor Youmans. Pictures by Will Rannells. Bobbs Merrill, 1941. \$1.75.

There is much in this book to recommend it to children. The story concerns the Gray children who keep a boarding kennel, and the plot centers around the mystery of the beautiful gold and white spaniel, and the story of the hermit. The narrative moves along easily, with descriptions of day-to-day events of farm-life—making a garden, canning, raising a little pig, and the like. A thoroughly good book for boys and girls.

**Smoke Eater.** By Howard M. Brier. Illus. by Louis Cunette. Random House, 1941. \$2.00.

Approved for technical accuracy by the Fire Department of New York City. About as exciting fiction as can be found. These stories of fire fighting, bristling

with technical terms to delight a boy, full of rescues, escapes, and hazards, would seem to be almost the sovereign antidote for the cheap thriller. Highly recommended.

**Greased Lightning.** By Sterling North. Illus. by Kurt Wiese. Winston, 1940. \$2.00.

Authentically rural American in subject matter, written faithfully from a boy's standpoint, and full of the vigor, zest, and humor of American farm and village life, this volume should hold its own even against the popular and deplorable comics.

Greased Lightning is a pig, the special friend of Zeke, a boy, and the author doesn't try to prettify either one. This hearty realism, plus crisp style and good handling of plot and climax make the book excellent reading.

In most instances, Mr. Wiese's pictures, particularly the jacket drawing, catch the spirit of the book. At other times, however, Mr. Wiese departs from the spirit of the story and makes Lightning too nearly human. Particularly unfortunate are the pictures of the things that do *not* happen.

Russia, Ireland, Albania, Spain, even from our American Indians. Each of the tales is told in distinctive style, for each is the work of an author of prominence.

The illustrations by Henry Pitz (see the frontispiece of this issue) are, like all his work, strikingly beautiful.



From *Pegeen*, by Hilda van Stockum. Viking.

**Sweet 'Possum Valley.** By Christine Noble Govan. Illus. by Manning de V. Lee. Houghton Mifflin, 1940. \$2.00.

This narrative of life on a Tennessee farm in the 1870's evidently based upon reminiscences, gives the atmosphere of the generous, informal life of a Southern farm in accurate detail. The characters, however, are sketchy, and there is little plot; the narrative consists of a series of incidents.

**Mister Ole.** By Richard Bennett. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$2.00.

Michael and Johnny, recently from Ireland, wanted a nice neighbor in their lonely valley in the Puget Sound country. In all the months they had lived in the valley, only one person had passed the house—an Indian. So when Mister Ole came down the old skid-road in a gaily-painted circus-wagon, the boys were very much excited. The adults of the O'Brien family didn't care much for Mr. Ole as a neighbor, at first. However, after he helped the O'Briens put out the fire, he was accepted gladly.

The characters of Mr. Ole, and of the Irish mother and grandmother are well-drawn. Illustrations give the very breath of the Northwest country, and the story is entertaining.

**There Was a Horse.** Folktales from Many Lands. Selected by Phyllis R. Fenner. Illus. by Henry C. Pitz.

This is a collection of fairy stories in which horses figure prominently. They come from many lands—

Many of the Knopf juveniles this year carry a note on the typography—an excellent idea; this book is set in Caledonia, and is an unusually handsome volume.

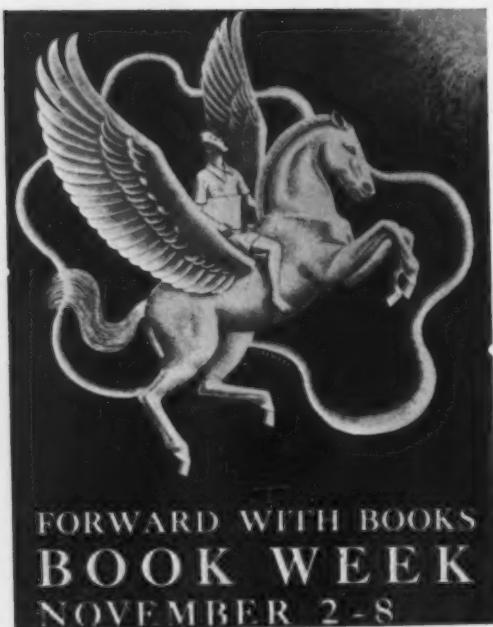
**How Many Miles to Babylon?** By Edna A. Brown. Illus. by Stephen Roney. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1941. \$2.00.

Episodes in the lives of a pleasant family are told from an adult viewpoint, one concerned almost entirely with externals—the correctness of manners, the authenticity of the antiques, the suitability of the books read. The children are sweet, pretty, well-mannered, and unreal. Certain mothers may enjoy the book.

**The Adventures of Five Little Scamps.** Told and illus. by Donn Crane. Albert Whitman, 1940. \$1.25.

The "scamps" are raccoons, and the jacket assures us that the author has adhered strictly to fact. This is undoubtedly so; but with subjects as mischievous, intelligent, and playful as these animals, the book might have been a great deal more interesting without departing in the least from accuracy. For several pages, the author takes the raccoons on a trip around the zoo, picturing and describing other animals in a way that does not contribute to the development of the main story. The diction is weak, and sentence structure, monotonous. The pictures are lively and appealing.

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Book Week Poster, 1941,  
by Helen Sewell.

**Ghosts That Still Walk.** By Marion Lowndes. Illus. by Warren Chappell. Knopf, 1941. \$1.50.

A collection of stories about famous American ghosts. Among others, there are Ocean Born Mary, Evelyn Byrd, the Bell Witch of Tennessee, and the Octagon House in Washington which boasts not one, but two ghosts, one of which is Dolly Madison who announces her presence by the scent of lilacs. The stories are straightforward, reasonably objective reporting, but there is an authentic shiver in each. A good volume for the librarian to have on hand for the seasonal demand for "ghost stories."

**The Tree that Ran Away.** By Henry Beston. Illus. by Fritz Eichenberg. Macmillan, 1941. \$1.00.

Discontented with a sedentary life, a pine tree, aided by a gnome, gathers its roots into two sturdy legs and sets off to see what is on the other side of the hill. This creates no little excitement among animals and

humans. The tree attends a country auction, talks with a sardonic cat, is present at the ceremony of unveiling a statue, conceals stolen goods, and finally returns home. Everything is in high good humor, and the pictures are as funny as the text. Designed for children 6 to 10, but adults will enjoy it too.

## INFORMATIONAL BOOKS

**Be an Artist.** By Marion Downer. Illus. by the author. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1941. \$2.00.

This is not a manual on drawing, but good, sound, down-to-earth advice to young people with art training. It deals with such subjects as keeping a portfolio, making appointments, and varieties of commercial art jobs. A good addition to "career books."

**Spice on the Wind.** By Irmengarde Eberle. Illus. by Richard Jones. Holiday House, 1940. \$2.00.

For centuries, men have fought each other for possession of the sources of spice supply; easy access to the spice-islands was one thing that sent Columbus sailing west. Naturally, a book devoted to the story of this romantic commodity is bound to be interesting. Miss Eberle has handled her material well, sketching the history, cultivation, and marketing of pepper, cloves, vanilla, nutmeg, ginger, and cinnamon. Other spices are treated briefly in a concluding chapter.

This volume should be a stimulant to lagging interest in a geography class; it will furnish highly entertaining and informative supplementary reading for English; and domestic science pupils, too, will find it in their field. In short, it is a widely useful, as well as a very beautiful book.

**The Story on the Willow Plate.** Adapted from the Chinese Legend by Leslie Thomas. Illus. by the author. Morrow, 1940. \$1.25.

This is not distinctly a children's book, but it is a book that would be very useful on library reference shelves, for almost every librarian has received requests for information about willow-ware china. The story of the mandarin, the rich suitor, the faithful nurse, and the young lovers who were transformed into doves to "live forever in beauty and constancy," is illustrated in blue.

## Editorial

### What Is A Good Children's Book?

FROM TIME to time, *The Review* has pointed out the unique place occupied by children's literature. It is a new literature, largely the product of the last hundred years. It is a distinct literature, happily free from the morbid introspection of much contemporary writing. And it is a commercially important literature, outranking all classes of publication with the exception of adult fiction, in number of titles.

Since it is so recent, it is not surprising that there is no body of criticism especially applicable to books for children. At the same time, the very number of juvenile books indicates a need for standards of selection. The teacher, librarian, parent, and the library and book selection committees are, consciously or unconsciously, asking themselves, What do children want in a book? What do we want in a book for children?

With no pretense to originality, and still less to profundity, we here set down some of the criteria that are being applied.

Children, it is said, want action, "animalness," and bright colors in a book.

Well and good. These should then be the first things we adults ask of a book for children. Our primary consideration is to select books that children will like to read.

Then as adults, we would add accuracy (or truth, realism, verisimilitude, or plausibility, if you prefer these terms).

First, accuracy of setting and atmosphere. If a book is about the Brazilian jungles, we want it (1) to contain no false statements or give no false impres-

sions, and (2) to give as much truth—the scent and feel and sound of the jungle—as the author's skill permits.

We have recognized action as indispensable. We would demand truth here also. Action should keep within the limits set by the story: if it is a realistic story, the action must pass the test of realism; if a fairy tale or fantasy, the action must yet appear plausible to the reader; even in romance action should not so far exceed possibility as to destroy the reader's illusion of reality.

Third, we may ask for truth of character. Children's literature has given us some child characters of great vitality. Huckleberry Finn is as real a person as Aunt Betsy Trotwood, or Robinson Crusoe, or Tess. So are Lucinda, of *Roller Skates*, Inez Hogan's Nicodemus, and Ameliaranne. So much for accuracy.

Next we might ask for style, and Miss Guttery's splendid paper on page 208 leaves nothing to be added here.

Finally, we would ask that all children's books be ethical. We do not want the dismal sermons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; still less the tiresome goody-goody books of the 1800's. But we do want the stories we give to children to be based on an all-embracing charity and good-will expressing themselves in action. If these qualities are present, there will be no weak sentimentality of the Elsie Dinsmore type, nor will there be the brisk opportunism of the up-from-poverty books.

Action, truth, style, and ethics—vague as they sound, are present in one form or another in great books for children, as they are in great books for adults.

# Shop Talk

## Forward With Books!

The celebration of Book Week this year, from November 2 to November 8, will be based on the stirring theme, "Forward With Books!"

Book Week Headquarters offer a variety of material for observance of the Week. The new manual of suggestions contains a brief history of Book Week, suggestions for teachers and school librarians, and a calendar of events, among other things. This manual is free. There is a small charge for other materials such as posters, window streamers, book marks, and book diaries. Make inquiry directly of Book Week Headquarters, 62 West 45th Street, New York City.

## The Newbery Award

*Call it Courage*, written and illustrated by Armstrong Sperry, was awarded the Newbery Medal by the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association as the most distinguished contribution to children's literature published during 1940. The book is published by Macmillan.

The story, which should be interesting to boys and girls from about ten years on, is of a Polynesian boy, and his efforts to overcome fear—fear of the sea, fear of men, and fear of himself. The book has the "great and passionate action" that Matthew Arnold held to be the first requirement of great literature. It is told with restraint, but with deep feeling for the subject, in a distinguished style. Teachers will feel that this is a happy choice for the Newbery Medal.

## The Caldecott Award

The Caldecott Award, donated annually by Mr. Frederic G. Melcher, editor of *The Publisher's Weekly*,

to "the most distinguished American picture book for children," was this year given to Robert Lawson for his book, *They Were Strong and Good*. Viking is the publisher.

Mr. Lawson is widely known for his illustrations of *Ferdinand*, by Munro Leaf, and for his beautiful drawings for *Pilgrim's Progress*.

## American Education Week November 9-15

For materials useful in planning the observance of National Education Week, write to the N. E. A. headquarters, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W. Washington, D.C.

A pageant, "Defense Through Education," suitable for this occasion, appears in the October issue of *Plays*. Make inquiries directly to *Plays*, 8 Arlington Street, Boston.

## Pi Lambda Theta Awards

Pi Lambda Theta announces three awards of \$250 each to be granted on or before September 15, 1943, for significant research studies on the subject of professional problems of women. A study may be submitted by any person of graduate standing, or by a member, group of members or chapter of Pi Lambda Theta, whether or not engaged in educational work. Manuscripts must be submitted before June 1, 1943. For further details address the Chairman of the Committee on Studies and Awards, Miss Marion Anderson, Ginn and Company, Statler Building, Boston, Massachusetts.

## STYLE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (Continued from page 212)

Lenski, Lois. *The Easter Rabbit's Parade*. Oxford, 1936.  
Lindman, Maj. *Snipp, Snapp, Snurr and the Red Shoes*. Whitman, 1932.  
Meigs, Cornelia. *Mother Makes Christmas*. Grosset and Dunlap, 1940.  
Nesbit, E. *Wet Magic*. Coward McCann.

Newberry, Clare. *Babette*. Harper's, 1937.  
Paull, Grace. *Peanut Butter's Slide*. Viking, 1939.  
Smith, Gertrude. *The Arabella and Araminta Stories*. Small, Maynard, 1937.  
van Stockum, Hilda. *Kersti*. Viking, 1940.